OLIVER CROMWELL

by John Drinkwater

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Christmas 1927

1921

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OLIVER CROMWELL

JOHN DRINKWATER

By JOHN DRINKWATER

MR. CHARLES KING OF ENGLAND

A BOOK FOR BOOKMEN

THE PILGRIM OF ETERNITY:
Lord Byron

VICTORIAN POETRY

THE LYRIC

New York:
George H. Doran Company

Oliver Cromwell

OLIVER CROMWELL

A CHARACTER STUDY

BY

JOHN DRINKWATER

Author of

"MR. CHARLES, KING OF ENGLAND,"

"THE PILGRIM OF ETERNITY"

NEW YORK

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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OLIVER CROMWELL
— A —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO
MY FRIEND
GEORGE DORAN

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NOTE

THIS is, specifically, a character study, not a history. My debt to Cromwell's own letters and speeches, as edited in Carlyle, I have referred to in the text. Lord Nugent's *Memorials of John Hampden,* 1832, a work of distinguished if forgotten merit, has helped me much in the earlier part of my study; and Mr. Trevelyan has been a very instructive companion by the way, while the fourth volume of the Cambridge Modern History is a valuable check on any study of Cromwell's period. Clarendon, Guizot, Burnet, Evelyn and Pepys have been on the table as I wrote, and acknowledgement should be made to indifferent historians of old like Heath and Noble, and those of the reformed model such as Professors Firth and Gardiner.

J. D.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	13
II.	BIRTH. CHILDHOOD	23
III.	ENVIRONMENT OF YOUTH	33
IV.	MARRIAGE AND A PURITAN HOME	47
V.	PARLIAMENT. THE PETITION OF RIGHT	59
VI.	DIVINE RIGHT	69
VII.	PREPARATIONS. ELIOT: LAUD	79
VIII.	THE STAR CHAMBER. SHIP MONEY	91
IX.	THE SHORT PARLIAMENT	103
X.	ASSEMBLING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT. THE REPRESENTATIVE PURITAN	111
XI.	EXECUTION OF STRAFFORD. THE GRAND REMONSTRANCE	121
XII.	THE FIRST CIVIL WAR. EDGEHILL. THE EASTERN ASSOCIATION	133
XIII.	THE IRONSIDES. MARSTON MOOR AND NASBY. FIRST CIVIL WAR ENDS	145
XIV.	THE ARMY AND THE PARLIAMENT	157
XV.	THE EXECUTION OF THE KING	167
XVI.	CROMWELL IN 1649	175
XVII.	IRELAND	183

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVIII.	DUNBAR AND WORCESTER	201
XIX.	LORD PROTECTOR	209
XX.	FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT	219
XXI.	SECOND PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT—CROMWELL AND KINGSHIP	231
XXII.	LAST DAYS AND DEATH	243

I

INTRODUCTION

OLIVER CROMWELL

A CHARACTER STUDY

I

INTRODUCTION

CROMWELL is one of the figures in history, in English history perhaps pre-eminently the figure, about whom no one can know a little without becoming partisan. The chroniclers who know everything may be too busy transcribing their documents to indulge their preferences, commonly with the result that they give a passionless account of as passionate a man as ever took an eminent part in human affairs. But knowledge at this rate lacks the quickening touch of prejudice without which the records of great men may tell nothing while affecting to tell all. What Cromwell precisely was, what even he precisely did, can never be known. But how the man that, on such evidence as is available, he is supposed to have been, how his imputed views and conduct have affected the

minds of people, how these appearances still affect our own minds, is discoverable, and it may be with profit. I think that I have read almost everything that has been written about Cromwell, and I know that I have forgotten a great deal of it. I shall in this essay duly "verify my quotations," but I shall be unabashed if I am told on unimpeachable authority that some of them are spurious. Ever since I was a small boy Cromwell has been one of my splendid heroes, and this for reasons that are very clear and succinct to me. If counsel for the Crown were to produce literal proof that a certain Oliver Cromwell of Huntingdon and Ely, member of Parliament, general of the revolutionary army, and Protector of England, was a crude fanatic, a self-seeker, a double dealer and an enemy of liberty, I should answer quite composedly that this was not my Oliver Cromwell. And this is how it should be. Either we find in such a man qualities signally memorable, or we reduce him to dimensions that are not memorable at all.

It is true that some observers while admitting the stature and power see the former as monstrous and the power only in evil exercise. That Cromwell greatly influenced the political events of his own time nobody is likely to dispute, but as much may be said of many men who have

taken an insignificant place in history, and the critics who invest his character with all the meaner traits of narrow and prejudiced duplicity, propose a Cromwell who becomes insignificant. If such a Cromwell existed, we cannot be concerned to know him, since on no account could he be worth knowing. There are, however, as we say, others who would make him not negligible, but contemptible. These have to be more seriously considered. To say that Cromwell was a petty though successful opportunist is merely silly, while to say that his was a phenomenal energy iniquitously employed may be mistaken, but it implies a view that has at least to be contested. The logical extremes to which Cromwell's policy led him, notably the execution of Charles I, stirred many minds to genuine loathing and horror; they also afforded less candid passions an effective opportunity for bringing themselves to the notice of authority. Honest men, shocked by convulsions that they could not understand, which were indeed not easily to be understood, saw, often with an inconsolable sense of tragedy, nothing in Cromwell but the common usurper and tyrant. But these and harsher terms were also much to the purpose of Restoration pamphleteers conspicuous rather for an eye to the main chance than for devoted piety, and by them made widely cur-

rent. To which class of censor James Heath belonged we need not enquire, but his *Flagellum: or The Life and Death, Birth and Burial of Oliver Cromwell the Late Usurper* is characteristic of these essays in invective. In it Oliver appears as This Fury, An Atheist or Mocker of God, the Bloody Man, Basilisk and Belial. He appears in every circumstance of iniquity, no emphasis being too grotesque for the purpose; when he hunts he is made "at the fall of a deer, where he would be sure to be present, to embrue his hands in the blood of it, and therewith asperse and sprinckle the Attendants." His death is obscenely described in physical detail, but shocking as the writer is able to assure us this was, he adds with high satisfaction that "his name and memory stinks worse," and of the revolting scene that took place two years later at the Restoration we read:

"On the 30 day of January 1660 [1661] that day twelve years of his most nefarious parricide, his Carcars with Bradshaws & Iretons, having been digg'd out of their Graves, were carried to the Red-Lyon in Holborn, & from thence drawn in sledges to Tyburn, where they hanged from Ten of the Clock in the morning till Sun-set, with their faces towards Whitehal, and were then inhumed under the Gallowes, and his Head set upon Westminster-hall to be the becoming Spectacle of his Treason, where

on that Pinacle and Legal Advancement it is fit to leave this Ambitious Wretch."

It will be seen that the impression made by Cromwell on James Heath was an unfavourable one, but it is not one affected by anything less than a very great energy. Heath and his like make no assumption of lightly dismissing a shallow impostor; they employ their most extravagant terms in prophesying against a man as terribly powerful as Beelzebub, one indeed who may be taken to be Beelzebub himself, and they cannot merely be laughed out of court. For we must remember that their heavily loaded periods, absurd as they may seem to us now, were in many cases written in a very fury of conviction. When *Flagellum* came from the press, academic disapproval of Cromwell's policy and character was unknown. The feeling against him might sometimes be exploited by hack lampoonists, but the feeling itself was unaffectedly savage. After all, Cromwell did conduct a revolution under arms, conducted it thoroughly and to a very bitter end, and such a man cannot expect any allowances to be made for him by his antagonists. We may believe to-day that Cromwell saved English liberty, but even so we have to realise that he did it in opposition to a party that was served by many gallant and honourable

men, and to them he cannot have appeared as anything but a calamity let loose upon society. It is significant that some of these men, convinced that Cromwell's ascendency was an incalculable disaster to their country, could yet see in him not only a force that was not to be escaped, but qualities that were admirable. No one had better reason than Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, to embellish his hatred of Cromwell with prejudice. Cromwell was the chief agent of a conspiracy by which for many years his own cause was humiliated in what seemed to be irreparable ruin. Of this cause Clarendon was in many respects the most representative spirit, and he believed in it with a fanaticism, not to say bigotry, that was never exceeded in the Puritan camp. He saw his political ideals discredited, his church denied, a master for whom he had an almost blind loyalty and affection brought to the block, and himself sent into ignominious exile, and in each circumstance Cromwell's was the responsible hand. Clarendon, moreover, had not a natural liberality of mind likely to moderate the resentment so amply inspired; flexibility of opinion was not among his many great gifts. Nevertheless, when he came to summarise the career that had involved his own in so much bitterness, he could write: "Cromwell was one of those men whom

his very enemies could not condemn without commending him at the same time: for he could never have done half that mischief without great parts of courage, industry and judgment. . . . Without doubt, no man with more wickedness ever attempted anything, or brought to pass what he desired more wickedly, more in the face and contempt of religion, and moral honesty; yet wickedness as great as his could never have accomplished those trophies without the assistance of a great spirit, and admirable circumspection and sagacity, and a most magnanimous resolution."

Here, then, we have from his severest judges, testimony to the man's greatness. That they should conclude it to have been shamefully misapplied is inevitable, but the most resolute attacks leave us with a figure of commanding stature. If on enquiry we should come to other conclusions: if we should find that an energy which, in the sharpest conflict into which Englishmen have fallen among themselves, compelled acknowledgment from the most fixed of its adversaries, was further used to finely constructive ends, then we may see in Cromwell one of the supreme heroes of our race. The first man to do this with a mind equal to the task and discriminating scholarship was Carlyle. I am not sure what position that somewhat crusty

evangelist holds in the esteem of historians to-day, but his great work on Cromwell remains one of the most passionate as it is on the whole one of the most convincing documents in our national archives. It is difficult to think of any that has contributed more to our knowledge of ourselves as a people, and it is certain that without it we should have missed half the meaning of a man and an age that had a decisive bearing on the England that we know to-day.

II

BIRTH. CHILDHOOD

II

BIRTH. CHILDHOOD

OLIVER CROMWELL was born at Huntingdon on April 25th, 1599. The Heathen writers note, with some dissatisfaction, that a malicious Fate in bringing him into this world gave no warning of her designs by "comets nor earthquakes nor such like Violences of nature," that his mother had no "fearful divinations when she was impregnate with him," and that he was not delivered in any preternatural way, as "with Teeth, or Heels forward, or long hair, or marks upon his Flesh"; though they make some amends to epicures of sensation by inclining to credit the belief that when he died fifty-nine years later at Whitehall he was in fact carried off by the devil in a storm.

His birth was, indeed, no more than matter for gossip among a few neighbours in a little country town. His father, Robert Cromwell, was a cadet in an upper middle-class family of some substance. The grandfather, Sir Henry Cromwell, lived at Hinchingbrooke, a considerable house standing about a mile out of Hunt-

ingdon on the London road, where he was succeeded by his eldest son Oliver, himself a knight and the uncle of his young namesake. Robert was a man of some property, of good standing in local or parish affairs, made one brief appearance in Parliament, and lived a modest and respected life as a gentleman farmer. The pamphleteers of a later date said that he had also been a brewer, an avocation it is to be presumed much to the distaste of the royalist public for whom the intelligence was meant. The rumour is in any case unsupported, though that a farmer then brewed ale for his own use and a little over is likely enough. Besides the eldest son Oliver, who lived with his father at Hinchingbrooke, Robert had other brothers, one of whom in turn had a son who is said by Heath to have been hanged for poisoning a lawyer; but, as Carlyle observes, this was too good a piece of scandal to have escaped all the other news-mongers if it had been in any way credible, and as we find it nowhere else mentioned it may be left to Heath's own enjoyment. Though, with Carlyle again, we may allow that "of course anybody *can* poison an Attorney and be hanged for it."

The site of Oliver's reputed birthplace in Huntingdon is still known, but the original house had long since disappeared. I say re-

puted, because there is a tradition at Hinchingbrooke that when Mrs. Robert Cromwell was near her time she moved out to the ampler establishment of her father-in-law for the added comforts that it afforded. But as Oliver was the fifth child in a family of ten, the fancy is probably no more than a pleasant one. His mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Steward, but she was already the widow of a William Lynne when she married Robert Cromwell. The variations on the names Stuart, Stewart, Steward, are obscure to any but good Scotsmen, and I am not prepared to say what if any justification there is for the view that through his mother Oliver Cromwell was remotely of a lineage with that Charles Stuart who was born at Dunfermline twelve months after his own arrival in or on the borders of Huntingdon. For the rest, all that need concern us genealogically are the facts that the family was connected with the Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, who is chiefly known to Englishmen as the associate of Shakespeare's Wolsey, and that one of Robert Cromwell's sisters was the mother of John Hampden, who was five years of age when his cousin, our Oliver, was born.

Clearly as the character and associations of landscape may be printed on our minds, nothing is more difficult to define, nor can we tell

45567

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whether our impressions are more than personal to ourselves. Familiarity with our own country may easily make us over-confident in our distinctions, and we imagine contrasts are not very real. None of us could confuse Cumberland with Suffolk, but I am not so sure about Warwickshire, for example, and Kent. However this may be, Huntingdon recommends itself with peculiar suitability as the birthplace of the great Puritan. Set between the brooding austerity of the fens and the rich and intimate but unspectacular pastures of the true midlands, grey in tone and watered by the Ouse that flows rather bleakly through unsheltered meadows towards the plain of Ely, it was a fitting cradle for the Ironside. Not that there is anything unfriendly or sapless about this part of the country to those who know it. On the contrary, it may be submitted that the influence of landscape on a man's nature is the more mellowing among such grave, reticent scenes, where beauty has to be slowly learnt, sought out, waited upon. The significance of these contacts has never been adequately explored, but we may take it that it was not for nothing that Shakespeare grew up in a homeland flowing with milk and honey, or that the boy Cromwell walked about a countryside not barren or ungenial, but sober, uneffusive, a little easterly in aspect. Parts of Ox-

fordshire have much the same character, and it is interesting to note that John Hampden was going to the grammar school at Thame in that county, while Oliver was attending a similar institution in Huntingdon, the two places being scarce fifty miles apart, linked together, or nearly so, through long ages of history by the Icknield Way.

We know little of Cromwell's life until at the age of seventeen he entered Cambridge University. A small crop of legend survives, doubtless upon some undiscoverable foundation of truth. It is still told at Hinchingbrooke how an ape belonging to old Sir Henry carried the infant grandson up on to the roof to the horror of the family, and almost with drastic consequences to English history. It is also told that when James I visited Sir Oliver, he was accompanied by his son Charles, who fell out with the host's nephew at play and got something of a dusting. Carlyle regarded these and all such tales with disfavour, but I do not know why we should be impatient of them. The kidnapping of an infant by a large monkey in an English country house is an incident not readily invented, and we know that royal visits to Hinchingbrooke were frequent, both Elizabeth and James taxing even the liberality that earned for Sir Henry the sobriquet of The Golden Knight, un-

til a final visit of the latter sovereign left Sir Oliver's fortune in ruin. Robert Cromwell's family were likely to be guests of his brother on such an occasion, and there is no reason why his children, Oliver among them, should not have met the young prince and even have squabbled with him and among themselves on a hot afternoon. We learn also that Oliver early took to robbing orchards, "a puerile crime and an ordinary trespasse," as Heath is constrained to allow, "but grown so scandalous and injurious by the frequent spoyls and damage of Trees, breaking of Hedges and Inclosures, committed by this Apple-Dragon, that many solemn complaints were made both to his Father and Master for redresse thereof; which missed not their satisfaction and expiation out of his hide, on which so much pains were lost, that, that very offence ripened in him afterwards to the throwing down of all boundaries of Law or Conscience, and the stealing and tasting of the forbidden fruit of Sovereignty, by which as the Serpent told him, he should be like unto a God." Before which storm we can but bow our heads, reflecting duly on the alarming prospects of such budding larcenies. But Oliver was not content with apples. He developed a taste for Young Pidgeons, rifling the dovecotes, eating and selling his spoils, "and that so publiquely

that he became a dreadful suspect to the adjacent Country," here also being presage of the days to come when he should "rob the King of his Innocence and Vertues and prostitute them to the People and Souldiery." His father is much blamed for "leaving him to the scope of his own inordinate and irregular will," in the gratification of which he went so far as to be a notable performer with the cudgels and even at Foot-ball. On the whole there is encouragement for the belief that "he was what nurses call a limb." A sturdy, thick-set sort of a limb, enterprising in his boyish way, not yet much troubled by the piety of the household in which he was brought up, but behaving, we may suppose, with decent consideration as one of a large family in which then as now the ordinary mutual concessions of daily life had to be made. Of his nine brothers and sisters six survived childhood, and they were all girls, though one brother seems to have lived until after Oliver left home for Cambridge in 1616.

III

ENVIRONMENT OF YOUTH

III

ENVIRONMENT OF YOUTH

On April 23rd of that year Oliver Cromwell was entered as a Fellow Commoner of Sidney-Sussex College. On the same day Shakespeare died at Stratford-on-Avon. What Oliver did or learnt at Cambridge nobody thought it worth while to record, as, indeed, why should they of a youth in no way distinguishable from a hundred others? For however much or little we know of his early years, and as may already be divined it is mostly little, there is no hint anywhere that he was marked out for future greatness. Legends of his having startled the ridicule of his school-mates by assuming a property crown and announcing that he meant to become King of England are Heathean fancies far less convincing than the accounts of his simian adventures; less convincing, that is, as being evidence of some serious intention, though that he did it is likely enough in the common traffic of any nursery or schoolroom. There is no evidence that anyone saw in him early promise of remarkable faculties, and none that he was in

those days himself conscious of possessing them. His prospects at Cambridge were those of any young man who after a modestly liberal education should go back to take his place in the affairs of a well-furnished but not affluent family, and in due course perhaps to preside over them. As things turned out the call came sooner than was expected, Oliver having been at the University little more than a year when his father died. He returned to Huntingdon, leaving Cambridge for good in the middle of 1617, but for some obscure reason did not remain to supervise the establishment of which he was the only male representative. Carlyle, observing that it was not fit for the boy of eighteen to take his father's place, as he might very well have done, adds that he naturally enough proceeded to qualify himself for his office by going to study law in London. The reasoning escapes me, though there may be something in it, but in any case we know that to London he went. He is said to have been a member of Lincoln's Inn, but the statement is not confirmed by the records. Of his movements until 1620 nothing authoritative is known, not, indeed, even that he was in London, but it was in London that in 1620 he was married.

Heath confirms the pledge of his Apples and little Pidgeons by informing us that in these

years after Cambridge Oliver became a notorious toss-pot and drabber. It was, it seems, because of these excesses that he was sent to London, an exile at his mother's orders lest he should corrupt the home. Carrion Heath, as Carlyle loves to call him, here well overreaches himself. Anybody can say this sort of thing about anybody else, and there are always professional defamers about who are eager to say it of everybody; but society has long since agreed not to be stampeded without evidence, and of evidence in this matter Heath and his friends have never been able to advance a pothouse tag. Moreover, although our knowledge of Cromwell's relations with his mother is slight, it all points to an unbroken tale of confidence and sweetness. That the young Oliver climbed over fences, not always very nimbly perhaps, and that he stole a young dove or two for his supper, we may believe; it is even possible that with the coming of adolescence he may have taken an indiscreet glass of malt or cowslip wine and have kissed the chambermaid. But Heath implies an incurable levity, and the charge is fantastic. At which we may leave it.

At the age of twenty Cromwell must have been conscious, as were all responsible men, of difficult undercurrents in the state. He must, for example, have been conscious of a certain

bad thing called Buckingham that was somehow affecting the lives of simple citizens in Huntingdon and such places. The creative surge of Elizabethan England had not yet spent its force, and the nation could still live upon its capital without disaster. But living on its capital it was, and serious patriots were beginning to realise that a reckoning would presently have to be made. In her assumption of a direct and personal power in the monarch, Elizabeth was the true daughter of Henry VIII, though like her father she had the good sense not to disregard the people's will, but to use it. Individuals, however distinguished or highly placed, who fell foul of the Queen's designs or even of her humours, often enough had melancholy occasion to reflect that personal liberty in England was no more than an illusion, but Elizabeth, through the agency of exceedingly able ministers, was above all else careful that these designs and humours should never come seriously into conflict with the interests of her subjects as a whole. The unexampled discoveries of her poets and explorers, the daily widening horizons of commerce, the rapid expansion of humane learning and the eager approach to modern philosophical science, gave her court and person an easy and undisputed prestige, and they kept the minds of men creatively and therefore safely occupied.

The strain upon the immediate counsellors of the throne was constant and severe, and hardly one of them could be sure at any time that his job, not to say his head, was worth a day's purchase, but the average Englishman felt with good reason that he had a profitable stake in in what was very much a going concern.

Under the first Stuart things began to change, not convulsively at first, but perceptibly to shrewd observers. James I neither understood nor wanted to understand the English people. Personally obstinate and inquisitive, with an agreeable flair for scholarship and the arts, his policy as a sovereign was all for securing a quiet life at any price. Quiet, that is to say, for himself; but the design necessitated certain conditions in the attempt to effect which a quiet life was made impossible for Englishmen in general for twenty tragic years. The first of these was that he, James, should have unlimited funds with which to cover his extravagances and, more particularly, those of his favourites, Buckingham in chief. A quiet life, in fact, meant a life without stint or responsibilities. James and Buckingham asked no more than that they should be allowed to do what they liked, when they liked, and as lavishly as they liked. Let the country supply means for that, and the country then could go to the devil or elsewhere without

interference. Whatever the present whim might be, from a water-party to an armed expedition on the Continent, it must be indulged on the moment and with reference to no authority beyond the royal pleasure. That if in these circumstances the country should actually go to the devil they themselves would take the same journey does not seem to have occurred to James or his parasite, neither of whom had the smallest state intelligence. The King vaguely supposed that a king of this world could not in any case come to any serious harm, and Buckingham, fondly intent on feathering his own nest, did not pause to consider what would happen if the tree in which it was lodged should be felled. And so began the irregularity in levying supplies that rapidly became a fixed principle which all the officers of the Crown were expected to adopt. The idea of the divine right of kings, as expounded by the first and second Stuarts, may have been capable of some spiritual interpretation in the abstract, but in practice it amounted to no more than an assertion of the King's right to spend the public money to any extent for any purpose he pleased, and no reckoning to be made. Elizabeth could never have lent herself to so gross a stupidity, and in the name of an awakening nationalism she might have done so with far more hope of fooling the people than

was possible when, a generation later, the first rapture was waning and the country was beginning to contemplate the adventure through which it had passed. Elizabeth would impoverish a wealthy courtier for her own ends without scruple, but even at a time of public excitement, when such courses are easiest, she allowed herself no sophistries about public funds. James, far less advantageously placed, had nothing of his predecessor's instinct for government nor of her essential integrity. When constitutional supplies seemed to him to be inadequate, he supplemented them by loot on a large scale, and gradually the people began to see that for them there was nothing in it of honour to compensate for the loss of profit. To say that the Puritan rebellion was the consequence of this recognition would, perhaps, be to over-state the case, but no circumstance did more to create the mood in which the will to rebellion was born.

The other condition desired by James for his quiet life was peace with foreign powers. This ambition, so laudable in itself, was unhappily not informed in his mind by any constructive aim. He merely wanted to be friends with everybody because it saved trouble, but it was beyond his power and even his inclination to discover what if any were the solid foundations upon which a general and lasting amity could be

built. That a council of Solomons could have solved the riddle of European political intrigue at the time—or at any time for that matter—is improbable, but it was at least necessary for any sovereign who was to retain the confidence of his people that he should make a show of pursuing a coherent policy advantageous to national interests or reputation. James never began to be coherent in his diplomacy, and denied the right of the people to keep any check on his caprices. He drifted from one insecure alliance to another, entered into undertakings that he had no prospect of fulfilling, and engaged in shady stratagems in which he had some of the cunning but none of the pertinacity and executive astuteness of his rivals. The consequent loss of national dignity might have been suffered without open revolt if the country's credit abroad had alone been involved in this cynically shiftless course, but the popular mind was slowly compelled to attention by an aspect of the King's conduct in foreign affairs which it neither would nor could view with indifference. Religion, as expressed in outward form and doctrine, was an issue on which a great and influential body of the people felt very deeply. Essential devoutness is not for the moment in question, nor need we ask whether the country was the better for the strictness of its formal pro-

fessions. The point is that to the majority of Englishmen in the early seventeenth century religious form was a matter of daily and vital concern, and the form by which the country as a whole stood was that of the Protestant church. Within this church itself the contentions between Episcopalianism or the establishment and Puritanism or non-conformity was deep, and in the end to prove one of the capital causes of civil war, but both factions alike were determined in their opposition to Rome. Under Elizabeth the supression of the papacy in England had been firmly and as it seemed finally secured, but there was still a numerous, influential, and by no means resigned Catholic population in the country. This community, again, was divided among itself, a certain number of political moderates professing loyalty to the Crown, while the Jesuits carried on an indefatigable conspiracy to overthrow the existing monarchy and government with the aid of foreign intervention, and bring a Catholic prince to the throne. With the accession of James in 1603 there was some relaxation of the penal code against Catholics, or at least in its enforcement, but the discovery and failure of the Gunpowder Plot two years later brought down the fury of the law and of the people upon the Jesuits and with them on English Catholics in gen-

eral. For six years a danger that was a very alarming one seemed to have passed, and then, in 1611, James, finding that accommodation to his taste in finance was not to be had from the Commons, decided to dispense with Parliament and govern by the more congenial instrumentality of Buckingham instead. Communication in those days was slow and difficult, and the constituencies relied chiefly on the occasional visits of their members for news of what was going forward at court and in the councils of state. With the members dismissed, this source of information was cut off, and it took a long time for the country to realise what precisely were the current practices of the King and his favourite. But slowly a rumour sharpened into authority that the Defender of their Faith was negotiating with the Spanish Court about a match between his son Charles, now Prince of Wales, and the Infanta. This opened up a future of terror to every Protestant mind. It was not merely a question of rival religious interests. Before their hopes, though nothing else had been blown up in the Gunpowder Plot, the Jesuits had been candidly debating whether, upon the enforced and happy re-conversion of England, the Inquisitional machinery of Spain or that of Italy would be the more suitable for this country, with a tendency in favour of the more thorough

methods of the former. The King of England, anxious for a quiet life, was proposing to buy the favour of a dominant European power by delivering his people into a bondage that had been broken with so much pain and fortitude. A Catholic consort meant who knew what concessions to Rome and England, and it more than probably meant Catholic kings in the coming generations. Before this menace the differences between Bishops and Nonconformists were for the moment of little consequence. The solid body of Protestant opinion in the country was disturbed by very exact and grave misgivings. And there was no apparent means of redress, or even of protest, in the absence of parliamentary representation. James had already told his subjects without ceremony that he meant to mind his own business about their money, and he had committed every kind of misdemeanour with their national inheritance from the preceding reign. He was now inviting the return of a scourge at the thought of which the stoutest might well tremble. And while nobody was clear as to what would be done about it, the gentlemen, the merchants, the artisans and the yeomen up and down the shires were awakening to the conviction that done something must be if the promise of personal liberty that for fifty years had been slowly defining itself was not to be swept away, it might be for ever.

IV

MARRIAGE AND A PURITAN HOME

IV

MARRIAGE AND A PURITAN HOME

SUCH was the mood that was manifesting itself in the mansions, the taverns, the counting-houses, the class-rooms and the market-places when on August 22nd, 1620, Oliver Cromwell was married in St. Giles's Church, Cripplegate, London, to Elizabeth Bourchier, the daughter of Sir James, a city worshipful of good standing. If the young couple had not been more suitably engaged, they might on the same day with a prophetic sense of spectacular effect have taken a walk of a few minutes to the precincts of St. Paul's, and there have seen the scholars coming out of the Church school, among them a rather scared small boy with a bran-new satchel on his back, by name John Milton, age twelve. Which John Milton was, fifty-four years later, after memorable associations with their own fortunes, to be buried in the church where they had just been married.

How much of the foregoing controversies had occupied the bridegroom's mind it is impossible to say, but that he had been aware of them we

may assume. If he had been in fact studying law, he would have made argumentative friends by whom these things must have been canvassed. In the ordinary course of family courtesies he is likely to have paid some visits to his Aunt Hampden in Buckinghamshire, where he can hardly have avoided discussion of such matters with John, who was in the next year to be returned to Parliament and was already stiffening his conscience against the payment of forced loans to the royal purse. That Oliver was by this time, at the age of twenty-one, a personable young man of promise is indicated by his marriage. Elizabeth Bourchier was the daughter of rich parents and, from such evidence as we have, a girl of charm and character. The Cromwell fortune would not have been a sufficient attraction in itself, and she could choose much as she would. Her selection of Oliver can have been dictated by nothing but personal preference, and the marriage remained a fair and happy one until his death. Their immediate business, however, was not with national affairs, but with a small though ample property at Huntingdon. Here they settled down with his mother, and for several years nothing happened that would have given Oliver even a footnote on any page of history.

Nothing, indeed, is more impressive in the

story that we have to tell than the lateness with which this most notable flowering of the English genius in action was accomplished. Little by little as his years advanced from youth, Cromwell matured in interests beyond those of his own few acres, but for long there was no sign that this amounted to anything more than the growing sense of responsibility that comes to any man with a homestead and a family to tend. Between the years 1621 and 1638 his wife bore him nine children, five sons and four daughters, of whom all but two boys lived to maturity. Until 1628 we get but dim and fugitive suggestions of contact with him; hardly indeed so much. A local doctor left it on record that he had often to attend Mr. Cromwell, who, as it seems, would get uncommonly low in his mind and think that his end was approaching, also being given to hallucinations or visions of some Wrath or another that frequented the town cross of a night. Carlyle sees in this a symptom of conversion to Calvinistic Christianity, with what sagacity we need not decide. There is no doubt that as Cromwell came fully into manhood his life was more and more governed by the religious habit that he inherited from his family and that was daily gathering momentum throughout England. The country learnt with profound relief that the project of a Spanish

match had fallen through, and that traffic with the Escurial was at an end. A Spanish war now seemed more likely than a Spanish match, and Englishmen viewed the alternative with hardy satisfaction. But as the menace of Rome once more receded, the cleavage between the Bishops and Puritanism actively reasserted itself, and the difficulties of nonconformist ministration increased. It was in these circumstances that Cromwell as a young married man at Huntingdon paid his voluntary levy in support of some one or another of the "lecturers" or excluded ministers, who, refusing to subscribe to the Episcopalian establishment, were privately employed by the growing Puritan community, until Laud at the height of his power harried them out of action. This much we know of Oliver in those years; we know also that on October 14th, 1626, he wrote an intimate little letter from Huntingdon, to an old Cambridge friend, Henry Downhall, thus:

"LOVING SIR,

"Make me so much your servant as to be Godfather unto my child. I would myself have come over to make a formal invitation; but my occasions would not permit me: and therefore hold me in that excused. The day of your trouble is Thursday next. Let me entreat your company on Wednesday.

"By this time it appears, I am more apt to encroach upon you for new favours than to show my thankfulness for the love I have already found. But I know your patience and your goodness cannot be exhausted by your friend and servant

Oliver Cromwell."

The son was duly sponsored, the chosen name being Richard: Richard who was many years later to make a pathetic succession to his father's office but to none of his greatness. The note is a poor scrap of evidence, but touching. "My occasions" were no more memorable than a market-day perhaps, or an urban committee meeting, or a visit from the lecturer on his rounds. We can imagine Mr. Downhall arriving late on a chill October evening from Cambridge, sixteen miles away, and being received with a good sea-coal fire, and mulled ale, and lavendered linen, while Mrs. Cromwell was sleeping upstairs with her fortnight old child, and the kitchen girl went at intervals to prepare the gentlemen's bed with a warming-pan. At supper, with the doctor perhaps, and even the lecturer himself, as guests, there would be many topics to discuss; the death of the old King a year before, and the continued ascendancy of Buckingham with the new one: the ethics of

parliamentary control, and the difficulty of seeing how in matters of religion a Bishop was better than the Pope: old Cambridge days: and perhaps the serious straits into which the extravagance along at Hinchingbrooke had landed Uncle Sir Oliver, who was in fact on the point of having to sell his estate there, which he did in the following year to Sidney Montagu, whose son Edward was to become Oliver's General-at-Sea, and later the first Lord Sandwich.

But however the conversation ran, we may be assured that Oliver, aged twenty-seven—always a year older than the century, as Carlyle conveniently puts it—took his share in it with gravity and good sense. Not, let it here be said once for all, the heavy-humoured thin-spirited gravity that has commonly been associated with Puritanism by people who know a great movement only by its excesses, and indulge themselves in gusty sentiment about the romantic nobility of Charles's Martyrdom. Wit and learning and high character were to join the ranks of both parties in the coming struggle, but on the whole the strength of Puritanism lay with the landed gentry of England, most of whom worked their own estates, the substantial merchant class, and the thrifty yeoman farmers. It lay, in fact, with the men who were relieved from the daily responsibilities of life neither by great inherited

wealth nor by indifference to personal security, the men who, because they took it as their part to accept and meet these daily responsibilities by their own initiative and industry, were the thoughtful men. The adventurers who enjoyed a superfluity of riches by doing nothing, and the adventurers who enjoyed none by the same process, found the Puritan doctrine of duty exceedingly tiresome. They were often charming, picturesque, and by no means deficient in gallantry, but they lacked principle. Far finer stuff was, we know, to be found on the Royalist side, but it was in opposition to this characteristically defective sense of responsibility that Puritantism consolidated itself out of the elements that have been indicated. To a party so founded gravity was in the circumstances a natural enough mood. When a large number of men representative of the constructive mind of a nation are brought together in a common distrust of the governing authority, in a conviction that their institutions are being betrayed and their rights challenged, they are likely to be grave. And in the days when Charles and Buckingham were drifting from one folly and excess to another and more and more setting the country's welfare openly at defiance, gravity was the inevitable note whenever two or three men were gathered together in Puritan protest. But to think of the

Puritan households as peopled by long-faced bigots with envy in their hearts and sanctimony on their lips is to know nothing of the truth. They were commonly households of a very sweet and genial domestic life, of generous hospitality, of free speech and liberal culture. The Puritan family, usually a large one, worked hard, played eagerly, committed its indiscretions with as little repining as needs be, cherished the arts, and feared God. Its high-minded discipline was neither ignorant nor fanatical. And these virtues of the home were carried into public life by a party that included John Hampden, John Pym, John Milton, Andrew Marvell, John Selden, Edward Montagu, Thomas Fairfax and John Eliot, and in its essential character was preparing the way for such men as John Bunyan and George Fox. It was the party of light and grace no less than of power. Even Heath allows of Cromwell himself that "he was a great lover of Musick, and entertained the most skilfullest in that Science in his pay and Family," though his motive, we learn, was like Saul to have exorcisement at hand against the devil within him. This was at the time of Oliver's protectorate, but a taste for such harmonies may very well have enlivened Mr. Downhall's visit to Huntingdon in 1626. That the young host was also worth listening to on more polem-

ical matters we may infer from the fact that already he was being talked of in the town as a possible candidate for Westminster. At the moment of our christening party, Charles, after two brief parliamentary misadventures, was again trying to give effect to his and Buckingham's designs without reference to the people; he had in fact dissolved his latest Parliament in the preceding June to save Buckingham from impeachment. Had Charles been capable of learning anything of statesmanship by experience, he must have seen that each renewed attempt to govern without parliamentary control was another move in the direction of disaster; but he could learn nothing. What wisdom could not reveal to him, however, necessity dictated. England was now at war with Spain, and on the verge of war with France. Through 1627 Charles and his despotic minister strove vainly to conduct an enterprise for which they had neither means nor ability, and in 1628 they were forced back on what appeared to them as no better than the distasteful expedient of once more convening the Houses, unless they were prepared to acknowledge the collapse of their foreign schemes. It was, accordingly, in March of that year that Charles's third Parliament assembled, and in it Oliver Cromwell, Esquire, was returned as member for Huntingdon.

V

PARLIAMENT. THE PETITION OF RIGHT

V

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THE gathering was one for ever memorable in English history. Hitherto the Commons, where —such as it was—the real authority of Parliament lay, had not been pusillanimous about telling both James and Charles that there was a people's no less than a royal prerogative, but their protests had been made on the King's sufferance, and any dangerous audacity in debate had always been countered by summary dissolution, not infrequently followed by imprisonment of offending members who, once the privileges of the House were suspended, were at the Sovereign's mercy on charges that could be retrospective and cover expressions used in the House itself. Charles had bluntly told his second Parliament that it was altogether in his power for calling, sitting, and dissolution; "therefore, as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be." When Buckingham was attacked, the King cut the discussion short by declaring, "I would not have the House to question my servants, much less

one that is so near me." The Commons now met —the day of March was the 17th—in a more stubborn temper. This time the King was clearly at his wit's end to know how to carry on without them, and the less likely to be hasty in their dismissal. But hasty or not he should, they were determined, pay some attention to their demands or get nothing from them. Four hundred men, inspired by a purity of devotion to the public cause such as has seldom been equalled, faced Charles and Buckingham with an inflexible purpose and an utter disregard of what the personal consequences of its exposition might be to themselves. Hardly a man among them shrank from the prospect of beggary, imprisonment, even death, if such should prove to be the penalty of speaking his mind. When the Speaker had taken his place an immediate vote was passed declaring taxation without parliamentary consent to be an abuse of the King's privilege. At first there were no outward signs of passion in the proceedings; all was quiet, orderly, marked with due consideration for Charles's person and office. A large sum of money was voted to the exchequer, on conditions. Charles wanted his subsidy, but had a strong prejudice against conditions of any sort. He had told these troublesome people more than once before that their function was to facilitate the collection of taxes

and not to waste his time and their own in the presentation of frivolous grievances. Now again he bade them mind their business and have done with conditions. But somehow his words seemed to fail of their wonted impact. Four hundred men, very grave men indeed now, listened respectfully, and as respectfully replied that the making of conditions was their business, that the people of England were in future going to be very particular about conditions, and that until the King accepted them he might whistle for his—or their—money. They said it very courteously, but that is in effect what they said. They said more. It was desirable that there should be no confusion in the King's mind as to precisely what these conditions were, and it was proposed to define them very clearly in a Bill. The King's impatience grew; but he curbed it, aware at last of some new and formidable resolution in these men. For six weeks the terms of the Bill, drafted by that strange compound of great lawyer, ruffian and patriot, Sir Edward Coke, were debated with rising emotion, while Charles nursed his apprehensions and told himself, as his father had done before him, that being a king he could after all have no reasonable grounds for alarm. At the end of April the Bill was presented to the house. It made exact provisions for representation before taxation,

for the security of the person and property of the subject against arbitrary seizure, and for the proper regulation of military power, with especial regard to billeting, pressing, and the imposition of martial law. It was, in short, a plain submission to the monarch that the people had rights, such simple and elementary rights that it is almost incredible to us that they can ever have been disputed, rights in the suppression of which the people could live with neither common honour nor common safety. These were the express conditions of the Bill; its undertone was directed against false counsellors who were a peril to the King and the State. Charles hereupon took serious fright. The mark of these inuendos was clearly Buckingham, and life without Buckingham was unthinkable. If the Bill passed, his machinations with his favourite would henceforth be seriously hampered. Not daring at this point, with the country's will suddenly grown articulate, to resort to the old expedient of dissolution, Charles offered to meet the wishes of the Commons by legislation if they would drop the measure, find the money he wanted, and go away. It was a forlorn bid. The time for compromise had passed, and the House proceeded with the instrument that was to be known in history as the Petition of Right.

As the debates advanced, the tide of magnani-

mous and long-controlled passion rose. Heat crept into the sessions. When Sir Robert Heath, the Attorney-General, put the Crown case, dismissing the plea of the people's traditional rights with some levity, Coke was on his feet in an instant, exclaiming that it was "not under Mr. Attorney's cap to answer anyone with arguments." When later the King sent a message demanding to know whether or not the House would accept his royal word to redress any wrongs that should be made manifest, Pym replied, "We have his Majesty's coronation oath to maintain the laws of England. What need we then to take his word?" And when the Speaker pressed for a less equivocal reply, Pym added, "there has been a public violation of the laws and the subject's liberties, and we will have a public remedy." What the King might do when the Petition was finally passed and sent up to him no one could tell, but the uncertainty instead of moderating the temper of the House emboldened it. Charles, at a late stage in the proceedings, sent another message warning the Commons "not to cast or lay any aspersion upon any Minister of His Majesty," and the order was greeted with a crackle of protest in which the strained feelings of over two months blazed out while more than one stout Puritan squire was seen to have tears in his eyes as he spoke. Here

was no easily induced and readily forgotten sensation; it was the profound and moving drama of a nation bearing solemn witness to a faith that was here and now to be asserted for the present and future times, even for us. Old blackguard Coke, now seventy-six years of age, for whom no decency was sacred but the inviolability of English law, stood up in apocalyptic power to declare that they had not been honest in the presentation of their complaint, and none more blameworthy for the fault than he; that he knew not whether he should ever again speak in this or any other public place, and that he would now say plainly what should have been said at first, namely that "the author and cause of all those miseries was the Duke of Buckingham." A storm of assent barely allowed him to finish. The onset was now irresistible; and after a little more impotent sophistry the Petition of Right received the royal sanction, and Charles received confirmation of subsidies amounting to three hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

That was on June 7th, 1628. London crowds capered round bonfires, and as hour by hour and day by day the news of the King's concession spread through the country more bonfires were lit. There was reason enough for the rejoicings, but, as the next twenty years were to show, the gigantic issue that had been raised,

far from being decided, was now but newly joined. The Petition of Right having been passed, the House pressed the enquiry against Buckingham. If Charles had hoped, as no doubt he had done, that his assent to the Bill would soften public asperity against his friend, within a week he was disillusioned. When the demand for Buckingham's removal was at last made explicitly, he dropped all pretence of accommodation, and on June 11th prorogued Parliament to October 20th. The members, Oliver among them, went back to their homes. On the next day the proceedings that had been instituted in the Star Chamber against Buckingham in order to propitiate the Commons were struck off the file, and preparations were made for the Duke to lead another expedition to the relief of Rochelle. In the middle of August the fleet was ready to sail from Portsmouth, Buckingham at its head, more splendidly than ever in royal favour. And in Portsmouth too on the 23rd of that month was young John Felton, a Suffolk gentleman who, with a grievance of his own about arrears of army pay, had made the journey to the sea-port with a twisted determination to redress what he was persuaded was an intolerable grievance of his country. With the desperate futility of all such fanatics, he proceeded to his attempt in a lamentable way.

In the early morning Buckingham received news that Rochelle was already relieved. He rose hastily to dress with the intention of taking the news to Charles, who was at a house five miles distant. As he was being valeted he carried on an argument in high terms with sundry officers who were of opinion that the news was a device of the enemy's to gain time. Dismissing their appeal, he left the apartment and was walking with a companion along a passage to another where his breakfast was served, when as it seemed from nowhere a stranger flashed between them, and in a moment the most powerful man in England was lying dead with Felton's knife in his heart. The King's grief was violent and sincere. Buckingham was the only man he had ever regarded or ever would regard with real affection. Charles was left with no ally congenial to his own humours, and open indications that the people looked upon his loss as their deliverance stiffened his angry pride against them.

VI

DIVINE RIGHT

VI

DIVINE RIGHT

THERE is no record that Cromwell had spoken in the House during these first three months of his parliamentary career. But he had undergone a startling, it may be said, a phenomenal experience. Still under thirty, he had taken part in an event that even to the actors at the time must have asserted itself as of historic magnitude. Three months at such a rate meant an infinite maturing; Elizabeth the mother and Elizabeth the wife cannot but have observed strange preoccupations in the man who came back to them from London after so short an absence. What this deepened mood portended they could not tell, nor could Oliver himself. He was shortly to have ample time to think it all out, to settle in convictions that were now initiated with all the emphasis of a first clash in the arena. Through the late summer and autumn of 1628 Oliver attended to his farm; discussed with his neighbours the significance of the things that he had seen at Westminster; exchanged, we may surmise, notes with John

Hampden about the condition of the State, cultivating perhaps the slight acquaintance that he had formed with some of the older leaders; and meditated much upon those ways of God to men that were presently to be the theme of the song in which the fire of Puritan genius was to burn with its purest flame.

The prorogation of Parliament was extended by three months, and it was not until January 20th, 1629, that the Houses re-assembled. In the meantime much had happened besides Buckingham's death. With Charles, out of sight was out of mind, and when the members had been dismissed in the preceding June he at once dismissed also from his memory the very displeasing obstinacy which they had displayed. At least, he tried to do so; but unfortunately there was the Petition of Right, duly recorded now a law of the land, to remind him most inconveniently of all that he so much wished to forget. His sublime obliquity was, however, equal to the occasion. He caused fifteen thousand copies of the Petition to be printed, and incorporated in it, not the terms of his assent, but those of his first unfavourable answer to Parliament's claims. Whom he thought to deceive by this bland expedient, he can hardly have known himself, but having had the copies printed he was somehow persuaded that the ob-

noxious measure had been effectively discounted, and proceeded to set its conditions at defiance in a continued and even more reckless course of arbitrary government. When Parliament met again they found all the old abuses in full sail. Irregular taxation, enforced payment, arrest in default, destraint on private property, the Commons saw these practices, against which the most solemn guarantees had been given, indulged with advancing cynicism by a king who was constant only in showing that he was incapable of understanding the nature of his pledges or of keeping them when they had been given. The fury of the House at the betrayal was undisguised. In the minds of many of its members there gathered something like despair. And yet despair was not of their quality. It was, rather, a settling conviction that sooner or later this quarrel would have to be decided elsewhere than at Westminster.

Taxation and *Habeas Corpus* and the Star Chamber were not the only matters to engage the attention of an angry session that lasted two months. The death of Buckingham had brought about important changes in the King's counsels. It had in the first place effected a reconciliation between Charles and his wife, Henrietta Maria, whose influence on the King had been closely limited by Buckingham's ascen-

dancy. It now asserted itself, and with a tendency that inflamed anew the country's smouldering suspicion of popery. That Charles ever came near to being seduced to the interests of Rome by his queen we have no reason to suppose, but Henrietta Maria's Catholic intrigues were notorious, and if they were far enough from achieving their ends, they lent colour to other antipathies. The High Church policy of Laud, now Bishop of London, was hardly less distasteful to Puritanism than popery itself; there was, indeed, a restless feeling in the heart of Puritanism that the one was not so very far removed from the other. "Fate and freewill, foreknowledge absolute"—these speculative differences had in those days more than a spiritual and philosophical import. Which church or party favoured which doctrine does not now concern us, but the Puritan belief that Laud's policy, which was also the King's policy, stood for religious intolerance and indirectly for secular oppression, does. It may be a tenable view that the member for Huntingdon was labouring under a theological misconception; but however that may be, we know that on February 11th, 1629, Oliver Cromwell rose and for the first time addressed the House, saying that he had it on reliable authority that a certain Dr. Alabaster had been heard preaching "flat Popery at

Paul's Cross," and asking what the House was going to do about it. What the House did was to order Mr. Cromwell to produce his witness, who was Thomas Beard of Huntingdon, known to fame as Oliver's schoolmaster, and less eminently as the author of a once fashionable work, *The Theatre of God's Judgements.*

Another consequence of Buckingham's removal was the rise of Thomas Wentworth in court favour. He was now thirty-six, and for some years had been a firm but moderate critic of the King's political misconduct. While, however, he had a theoretical respect for popular rights, he had no enthusiasm for popular control of government. By instinct he favoured the idea of what amounted to an absolute monarchy, so long as the King and his immediate advisers showed ability, and an incorruptible sense of public duty in their office. Moreover, he disliked the religious aspect of Puritanism. When, therefore, Charles was looking for a minister to succeed Buckingham, and approached Wentworth, it was not difficult for that genuine if mistaken patriot to convince himself that he could best serve his country by attaching himself to the King and working towards the wiser and purer administration of a system that he believed to be good in principle. He understood the temper of the times no better than

Charles himself, but he opposed it with a statesmanship and purity of motive that were utterly beyond the scope of such men as Buckingham and his master. Whatever traces of dignity and honour we find in the political ideal for which Charles so impotently stood, are the legacy left to history by the talents and character of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. If it had been possible to impose that ideal on the age of Cromwell and Milton, Wentworth's devotion and integrity might have done it. But the task was beyond human powers. Charles had sense enough to value the qualities of his new minister at something like their proper worth, but Wentworth never began to replace Buckingham in the royal affections. How the King requited services that shed upon his disastrous sovereignty its only lustre, we shall see.

The Puritan members, on returning to London in March 1629, were deeply shocked by what they regarded as the defection of one of their own leaders. Further, they knew that for the future the King's case, with which all hope of adjustment was rapidly disappearing, would be shaped and pleaded by an intelligence far above any that it had yet commanded. Wentworth, newly created a Viscount, is said on an early day of the session to have been leaving the House of Lords when he met Pym. He assumed

a cordiality that was belied by the embarrassment of both the old friends. "Well, you see I have left you." There was no cordiality in Pym's reply. It indicated a mood out of which all the humour had gone: "Yes, my Lord, but we will never leave you while that head is on your shoulders."

Realising that the Commons, instead of attending to business, were again fixed on their interminable grievances, Charles resolved to be rid of them once more and, if by any device it could be done, for all. He ordered the Speaker, who was very amenable to the royal pleasure, not to put any more indiscreet questions to the House; and when Sir John Eliot rose to the very height of indiscretion, the said Speaker, Sir John Finch, attempted to do as he had been told. The "question" was to the effect that anybody introducing popery or anything like it should be "reputed a capital enemy to this Kingdom and commonwealth," as also should anybody advising, levying, or even paying taxes unauthorised by Parliament. As Eliot demanded that the question be now put, Sir John Finch declined the responsibility, and rose to leave the House. He was forcibly taken back to his Chair, and there held down while in a scene of uproar the question was taken as having been duly put, and something like four hundred voices rang out a

thunder of "Yeas!" In the meantime the doors had been locked, and now loud cries from outside to open in the King's name broke upon the turmoil within. Eliot's resolution was passed in a passion of assent, the House adjourned for eight days, and the doors were flung open. As the members poured out into the street they hustled Black Rod as he stood demanding entrance, and coming down Whitehall they saw the King's Guard whose captain presented his orders to bring away the mace. He was told that the mace was there if he chose to fetch it. Eight days later Charles came to the Lords, and without calling the Commons to the bar, dissolved Parliament, declaring that he would have no more of such vipers about him. And for eleven years the people of England had no voice in the government of their country. No voice, that is to say, which could deafen the royal ears with its importunities. But the voice was there for such as could hear it; a still, small voice, that when next it was to come to the public councils should be more terribly importunate than ever.

VII

PREPARATIONS. ELIOT. LAUD

VII

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WITHIN a few days of his thirtieth birthday, Oliver was back home once more, and for ten years led a life that was industrious and pleasantly eventful, but in no respect notable unless we read into it the promise of what was to come. He had said his "Yea, yea" loudly enough on that stormy March morning, and had made a sufficiently clear profession of opinion to any who may have been concerned to listen. If the King should change his policy, Oliver would doubtless be returned again for Huntingdon, but year followed year and no Parliament was called. Puritan resentment against the practices of the Crown was appeased by nothing that happened in the years between 1629 and 1640; it was continually fed by new excesses. But no man could very well see how further protest was to be made in the absence of Parliament. Individual resistance to this or that injustice served to keep the old ardours fresh and bright, but provided no opportunities for effective corporate action. It needed

the lessons and the occasions of the first years of the Long Parliament to show men, Oliver among them, how the full impact of the revolt was to be organised and delivered. In the meantime there seemed to be no prospects of anything but civic staunchness, patient farming, an amiable domestic routine, and a devout preparation of the spirit for any call that might come. That the call if it came would be a spectacular one was in no way probable; it was unlikely that it would ever come at all.

In 1630 Oliver was serving as a Justice of the Peace for the Borough of Huntingdon, but we get no glimpse of him dealing with such trespassers or suits as may have come before him. In the next year he sold his Huntingdon property and moved with his family to St. Ives where he became tenant of grazing lands lying along the banks of the Ouse at the east end of the town. Here he lived for five years, still destined, it would seem, for obscure competence and honour, bearing as might be the injustices that were so freely distributed from Whitehall among his friends and countrymen. Occasions for such fortitude were plentiful. He had heard how on the breaking of Parliament the more active promotors of Sir John Eliot's resolution, its author among them, had been put into prison by the sentence of intimidated judges.

He had heard how Eliot, a man in the young prime of his life, refusing to admit that his action had been treasonable, had slowly wasted into a decline in the foul air of his cell in the Tower. And then he had doubtless heard much more of the matter from John Hampden, for Hampden held Eliot's affection to be "a noble purchase," and wrote many and touching letters to his friend in captivity, full of solicitude and offers of family service, now "searching my study for a booke to send you," now offering by "this bearer . . . a buck out of my paddock." Shameful things happened to Sir John Eliot, and Hampden would have news of them for Oliver when they met. He would be able to tell how this subject, who loved England with single-minded heroism, being grievously sick in lonely confinement, sent a request to the King, not for pardon or remission of his sentence, but that he might be set at liberty, "that for the recovery of my health I may take some fresh ayre"; how that when the King replied that this was by no means humble enough in tone, Sir John Eliot explained that he was only asking for a temporary respite, so that "when I have recovered my health I may returne back to my prison there to undergoe such punishment as God hath allotted unto me"; how that when the King further told the dying man that he must

acknowledge his fault and plead for pardon before any consideration could be shown him, Sir John Eliot told the King, in whatever words suited his Puritan decorum, to go to the devil; how that his family asking that they might be allowed to visit and comfort him, the indulgence was refused; and, finally, how that when Sir John had duly died of consumption in the Tower at the age of forty, and his son begged leave to take away the body for burial, the King with a pretty wit endorsed the note, "Lett Sir John Eliot's body be buried in the Churche of that parish where he dyed."

Then there was William Laud, who at the age of sixty became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. He had piety and a genuine zeal for his church, but he could not endure that anyone should refuse to conform to his own doctrine and practice. A long tale of religious persecution might seem to him a sufficient example for whatever experiments in that line he might choose to make himself, but he unluckily chose to make them at a time when the people of England were suddenly determined to stand no more of it from one persuasion or another. On his elevation to the primacy Laud proceeded to hunt "lecturers" with a most diligent nose, and caught a great many, among them the preacher of abominable heresies in Huntingdon. Some-

times the victim was merely suppressed, sometimes his history became obscured in the enfolding mists of the Star Chamber. It should be noted here that between Laud's persecution of the Puritans and the general instinct in England for persecuting popery, there was this important distinction. A Roman England meant, in the minds of the people at large, an England in political bondage and finally deprived of liberty. The opposition to Catholicism was not profoundly a religious movement at all, but inspired by dread of foreign domination. Laud's tyranny was exercised against his own countrymen, and aimed at imposing his ecclesiastical will on a conscience that rejected it. Englishmen said to Rome, "Keep away: we suspect your theology of political designs, and you smell of the Inquisition; if you insist on coming where you are not wanted, we will drive you out relentlessly." Laud said to Englishmen, "Acknowledge my ritual, or be outlawed." He said in effect, much what Englishmen feared Rome would say if it had the chance. Anti-papist demonstrations were not an attempt to make Catholics change their opinions, but a precaution against what were with very good reason believed to be Catholic intentions of making other people change theirs. The answer to Rome was the penal code against popery: the

answer to Laud was to be the Puritan Revolution.

Very quietly the Puritans somehow contrived to keep a few ministries in operation, but one by one they were detected and uprooted by Laud's consecrated enterprise. To Oliver and men of his mind the privation had a double edge; it frustrated their spiritual needs, and it challenged on a new ground the personal liberty that was a living article of their faith. That in the time to come the Puritans became heady like other people in success and fell into extravagant follies in denial of their own gospel, does not alter the fact that these were at worst the lamentable defects of a temper that in its proper character was represented by the Petition of Right. Every great constructive movement in history has to bear the odium of excesses committed by its own "lunatic fringe," and before the Puritan revolution had been accomplished it had some rather ugly scores to its debit account. But many cheerful censors of obvious crudities in the later Puritan reign forget that they would have had very much less reason in our modern world to be cheerful at all if Cromwell and his fellows had not once fought a despotic throne with an equal determination to serve God and keep their powder dry. It was this resolve that made Laud's tyranny, often a

ferocious tyranny, so intolerable and finally brought Laud himself to a dismal end. When in 1636 the trustees of funds that provided lecturers in such places as they could visit with safety, suspended payment to the minister of St. Ives, Cromwell wrote to one of them urging that "surely, Mr. Stone, it were a piteous thing to see a Lecture fall, in the hands of so many able and godly men, as I am persuaded the founders of this are, in these times, wherein we see they are suppressed, with too much haste and violence, by the enemies of God his Truth. . . . I beseech you therefore in the bowels of Jesus Christ, put it forward, and let the good man have his pay. The souls of God's children will bless you for it; and so shall I; and ever rest, Your Loving Friend in the Lord, Oliver Cromwell."

That phrase, "in the bowels of Jesus Christ," is of peculiar appositeness to our theme. Considered unhistorically, it has a musty, antiquated flavour. How fantastically would it divert the town if Mr. Ramsay MacDonald were to beseech Mr. Baldwin to do something "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." But the levity, we think, would be uncomfortably sobered if it could be confronted by the very presence of Pym, or Hampden, or Eliot, or Cromwell testifying in such terms. We do not speak in that

way now, but we can never understand the Puritans until we realise that they spoke so out of a habit that lost none of its spontaneity in daily use. When Cromwell besought his correspondent thus, he did it without intending any special effect or emphasis, taking up his pen without deliberation as he came in from the crew-yard or cattle-market, to practice in the Lord who was as familiarly present to him as his own shadow in the streets of St. Ives. The idiom in which his plea was made was as far from cant as it was from profanity.

Other incitements to thought were provided by the King with continued ingenuity. Irregular collection of tonnage and poundage, the imposition of levies for the militia made with open disregard of pledges, shameless traffic in monopolies, heavy penalties for anyone who refused to accept the honour of knighthood when offered it at what was considered to be a reasonable price, the revival of obsolete forest laws, these and other such abuses were the commonplaces of Charles's policy under improvised proclamations of the Privy Council. Resistance was answered by perfunctory trial, if any, and imprisonment without hope of appeal. Blind and deaf to popular disapproval that had no means of making itself articulate, Charles and his advisers fondly believed that their con-

trol of the state was now firmly and, for them, prosperously established. They formed a resolution that this happy condition of affairs should never again be endangered by the importunities of Parliament. Charles Rex, said Wentworth and Laud, was a sufficient and satisfactory instrument for the government of England, and court sycophants of every kind loudly expressed their approval of so profitable a doctrine. When disobedient or critical persons were astute enough to keep outside the very pliable process of an illegal law, there were other ways of dealing with them. A suspect country gentleman could be warned to retire to his place in the shires, with a hint that his return to London would be inconvenient, chiefly to himself. A merchant of doubtful character could be ruined by being forbidden such ports as afforded him any chance of successful competition with favoured rivals. Commodities of daily use, soap, grain, wine, leather, the staple metals, glass, were given over to the monopolists, who exacted from the people fantastic profits and a liberal margin for Court dues.

Oliver and his friends, then, had much upon which to reflect in the years of his farming at St. Ives. What might come of their reflection no one could foresee; it was difficult to see how anything could come of it at all. But the Court,

emboldened by its apparent security, was by increasing excesses to provide the answer. Provocation was steadily moving to a point when the long-tried anger of the people must kindle into a terrible flame of power and purpose. Moderation in Charles and his council during the years 1630 to 1635 might have altered the whole course of English history and have left us today with institutions such as our minds can hardly conceive. But moderation was unknown to them, and by follies that could be cured only by reforms as violent as they were profound, they made the Puritan Revolution inevitable.

VIII

THE STAR CHAMBER. SHIP MONEY

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THE STAR CHAMBER. SHIP MONEY

In 1637 new evidence of Catholic influences at Court set the presses busy with controversial pamphlets. The Puritan champions continued to show little discrimination between the Pope at Rome and the Archbishop at Lambeth, and Laud determined upon exemplary measures. Once and for all Englishmen were to be shown that revolt against the Establishment was not to be tolerated. Three men of good birth and standing were summoned before the Star Chamber, and accused of publishing tracts subversive of episcopal authority. They were Henry Burton, aged sixty, minister of a city church; John Bastwick, aged forty-four, a physician who had graduated at Cambridge and Padua; and William Prynne, aged thirty-seven, a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford. Burton and Prynne had both come into conflict with their judges before, the former in 1629, on account of his *Histriomastix,* the latter in 1634, and both had suffered imprisonment. Prynne had further had his ears

cut off in the pillory, but had found a friendly surgeon to sew them on again. It was for utterances made in prison that he was now brought from the Tower for his second trial. All three defendants were found guilty, and on June 30th the sentence of the Chamber was executed in Palace Yard outside Whitehall. A sullen crowd watched these three men led out and placed in the pillory, saw what then went forward, and broke out into cries of indignation that the Royal Guard was powerless to suppress. Each of the convicted men had his ears cut off, Prynne for the second time, and each was branded on the cheek with the letters S.L., to show for ever that he was a Seditious Libeller. As he was released, Bastwick fell fainting into the arms of his wife, who somehow had bought or pleaded her way to the dreadful scene. And then the three, with the blood streaming down their faces, were led away to the completion of their sentences, which was solitary confinement for life. Soon afterwards, John Lilburne, a young man of twenty-one, was brought before the Star Chamber for being concerned in the publication of the offending pamphlets, given his taste of the pillory, whipped at the cart-tail through the streets of London, and sent to reflect upon his indiscretions in one of His Majesty's gaols. And as news of these things travelled through

England, thousands of sturdy Puritan hearts cursed Charles for a beastly and abominable King, and Laud for a beastly and abominable prelate, and swore to themselves in the bowels of Jesus Christ that a reckoning should be made.

This was in 1637. In the preceding year, Oliver had inherited his Uncle Thomas Stewart's property at Ely, and had removed thither with his family. While he had been at St. Ives his mother had continued to live at Huntingdon, but she now rejoined her son in the home of her own childhood. The little that we know of the household leaves a faint but secure impression of domestic peace as Oliver, now approaching forty, cared for his mother, his wife and his children. Turbulent thoughts were rising in his mind as these tidings of infamous happenings in London came down to his new fenland home, but within doors there were tranquillising moods.

Laud inaugurated the reign of his bishops in Scotland at about the same time that he showed Prynne and the others what was what. At least, he tried to do so, but on the first attempt to read the Liturgy in an Edinburgh church a certain Jenny Geddes flung a historical stool at the episcopal head and defied any Pope to say mass in that company. News of this also may have reached Oliver, as certainly did the account of

yet another shocking display of indocility from one very well qualified to speak.

The growing opposition to the Court at home found the credit of the country abroad sunk to its lowest ebb. The wars with France and Spain had come to an ignominious end, their very uncertain purposes having been wholly unachieved. The English seas were openly raided by African pirates, Holland trespassed on our fishing rights, and no foreign power troubled so much as to enquire what was the opinion of Whitehall. The successes of the King were over the laws and liberties of his own subjects, but nowhere else to be observed. In these circumstances it was thought fitting to extend the sphere of operations at home, and turn the screws yet a little tighter. That the resistance to illegal taxation was daily growing more stubborn and explicit did not discourage men who were by now in a permanent state of political intoxication. One Richard Chambers, being fined two thousand pounds for disputing a levy made upon some of his merchandise, and sent to prison until he should sign a form of submission, wrote instead, "All the above said contents and submission, I, Richard Chambers, do utterly abhor and detest, as most unjust and false; and never till death will acknowledge any part thereof." Prynne and Bastwick and

Burton had likewise, in an extreme agony, never ceased to protest that the damnable iniquity was not theirs but the Court's. More and more freely, in fact, men were following the example of Sir John Eliot in telling the King and his accomplices, in an expressive range of idiom, to go to the devil, but without the smallest effect upon the royal policy. The discreditable condition of the country's honour at sea suggested that fresh supplies could be raised, with some show of reason and some hope of public acquiescence, on the pretext of mending this decline. And so the expedient of Ship Money was devised. Richard Chambers, who in 1635 had somehow got out of prison after six years of confinement, now showed that the lesson had been lost on him by again resisting the King's officers, whereupon he was again removed to gaol as incorrigible. At first the new tax met with some success, being levied only in sea-port towns that might hope for direct enjoyment of its benefits. But when Charles thereupon proposed to enforce it on all inland shires and towns, the revolt was immediate and uncompromising. The very natural suspicion that the money would not be used for its avowed purpose at all was eclipsed by a far more fundamental objection. Had nothing more than the misappropriation of public funds been involved,

the matter could have been dealt with by the ordinary processes of law or impeachment. The question now raised, by no means for the first time, but at length with critical directness, was not how the public funds were to be used but how they were to be raised; whether, in fact, money illegally exacted could in any sense be said to be public funds at all. The general and open campaign for the levying of Ship-Money was to give the country an opportunity of declaring its mind on the policy of loot; and presently, in decisive terms, upon the character of the looters. In 1636 a writ was issued requiring the county of Buckingham to supply a warship of four hundred and fifty tons and a hundred and eighty men and appertaining cannon, muskets, gunpowder, etc., etc., and to deliver the said ship fully equipped in Portsmouth harbour on an appointed date. And if (as was likely enough) the loyal subjects of Buckinghamshire should be unable to build and furnish such a ship, then they were forthwith to pay a sum of four thousand and five hundred pounds into the King's treasury. The agents sent down to the High Sheriff of the country with this demand were very coldly received, and were presented with a list of persons who proclaimed themselves as intending defaulters. And fore-

most upon this role of honour was inscribed the name of John Hampden.

By popular consent Hampden's was at once accepted as a test case. He was a man of wealth, and the amount at which his personal liability was assessed was trifling—no more than a few shillings. There could, therefore, be no question of any motive for his action other than that of public spirit. The King took counsel with his judges, being careful in his charge to let it be plainly known that any judge who valued the King's favour would carefully consider the King's wishes. The judges thereupon dutifully pronounced the levying of Ship-Money to be legal, and Hampden was summoned to show cause why he should not pay his lawful dues. Hampden appeared, and with his advisers flatly denied that there was anything lawful in any of these proceedings whatever. When this argument became too pertinent, it was judiciously called to order by the bench. Through the Hilary, Easter, and Trinity terms the case went on, not because the issue was ever in doubt, but in order to produce an effect of scrupulous forbearance and impartiality. But such was the weight of Hampden's appeal, that even the judges were divided. One by one they gave their findings, and it was not until June 9th, 1638, that the last judgment was delivered,

when eight of the judges had decided for the King and four for Hampden.*

It is, no doubt, due to lack of vigilance on my own part, but I have nowhere been able to discover what happened in the matter of actual payment as a result of the decision against Hampden. It is, however, a matter of small consequence. Whether he accepted the judgment of the Court or not, we know that he abated nothing of his opposition to the principle that had been thus inconclusively tested. The fact that four judges, with superb courage and complete disregard of their own interests, had defied the crown, gave heart to the Puritan party throughout the country. On the other hand, knowledge that the judgment had in fact gone against him, in spite of arguments that nobody would hear without being persuaded in his conscience, showed Hampden and the other leaders of the movement how seemingly desperate were the odds against which they had to contend. In such a condition of mind we can imagine Oliver and his cousin to have met in these times. While John's trial had been going forward, Oliver

* The names of the judges, worth recording for their part in this epic moment of English history, were: for the King—Weston, Crawley, Berkeley, Vernon, Trevor, Jones, Finch, and Bramston; for Hampden—Croke, Hutton, Denham, and Davenport. Jones in his judgment for the King made reservations that may justify the claim of some, Mr. Trevelyan and Dr. G. W. Prothero (*Cambridge Modern History*) among others, that the decision was seven to five.

himself had conducted a process of his own in the name of freedom. A local problem of great importance to the people of his neighbourhood was the draining of the fens. Enlightened opinion was favourable to the scheme in so far as it concerned land improvement, but decidedly opposed to it in so far as it proposed to grant certain advantages to be derived therefrom to the Bedford family by royal favour. To improve the land for public use was one thing, but to enclose it by monopoly from public use quite another. Cromwell led the opposition, and at a mass meeting in Huntingdon presented the people's case not against the draining but against the private exploitation of the Bedford Level. The incident enhanced his reputation in the district for liberality and fearlessness; marked him as a man whom others might safely follow if there should be yet a bolder bid made in the cause of ancient liberties. We cannot question the literal simplicity of a confession made by Oliver in a letter to a friend at this time: "If here I may honour my God either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad." For the moment, however, the way to effective national action remained obscure. Large numbers of Puritans, hopeless of repairing their condition in England, were emigrating to the New World. It is said that Hampden and Cromwell were

themselves preparing to follow this example, had, indeed, actually embarked, when an order of the King in Council forbade any man to leave the country without express warrant, and their ship was prevented from sailing. And so, with incomparable irony of circumstance, Cromwell was detained to do his work in England by Charles's intervention.

IX

THE SHORT PARLIAMENT

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SUDDENLY the situation cleared. Scotch resistance to Laud's attempt at imposing his ritual on the Kirk roused the country to a high pitch of excitement. People of all ranks joined in a Covenant to preserve the Presbyterian faith. Orders from Whitehall and from Lambeth were alike ignored, and any attempt to read the new service produced rioting in the churches. At length Charles decided on active measures; but he had no means of carrying them out. Scraping together some semblance of an army with money raised by further forced loans under the authority of the Privy Council, he set out for the north to bring the insurgents to their senses. On his arrival he found them presenting far too formidable a front to encourage a trial by arms, and the terms of an agreement were hastily improvised. Returning to London from this abortive expedition, he formed a resolution that the royal dignity must somehow yet be vindicated. But how? The answer was extremely mortifying, but it was the only one.

Clearly a real army must be organised, and as clearly this could not be done without ample and regular supplies. These, on the necessary scale, could only be obtained by popular consent, which deplorably meant the calling of the vipers back to Westminster. Early in 1640 Parliament was summoned after an interval of eleven years, and assembled on April 13th.

It represented the fine flower of English character. The King's party was itself fortunate in the allegiance of men who sought to restore honour to a corrupt cause, Lucius Cary Lord Falkland, Sir Bevill Grenvil and others, among them Edward Hyde, now a young man of thirty, who did not allow his royalist sympathies to condone the grave and dangerous practices of the Court. The opposition of such men gave an added sense of responsibility to the Puritan members who met with the consciousness that their duty was not to make a high-tempered display of rhetoric, but to give sober, reasoned, and weighty expression of the people's will. And their sessions were in fact distinguished for the most part by an equable steadiness and restraint, by a refusal either to be provoked or to be intimidated. Oliver Cromwell was returned as one of the members for Cambridge.

As soon as the King presented his demands

for subsidies, the House let it be clearly understood that while every consideration would be shown for contracted liabilities, and a disposition to forget past irregularities, nothing at all could be done in the matter of supplies until a sufficient guarantee was given against grievances in the future. This meant a definition of the grievances, which would take time, and the King was in a hurry. Also it meant that the House was dictating methods of procedure instead of doing as it was told, and the King was as obstinate as ever. Before any business could be done, this question of "supplies before grievances" or "grievances before supplies" had to be settled. In vain Charles protested that if the House would fill the exchequer he would give any guarantees they asked. The royal word had been tried too often and found wanting. The Puritan majority would not concede an inch of ground. Pym and Hampden, moderate in speech and inflexible in temper, led the Puritan debate. Hyde made ingenious attempts to effect a compromise, and failed. The Commons would vote not a penny until security of and personal freedom was assured; they even went further, and suggested that instead of making war on the Scots, Charles should make a rational peace with them. Wentworth told the King that to yield on the one point meant a

definite surrender of his prerogative, and Laud told him that to yield on the other meant the coming of ecclesiastical anarchy. The counsel on both hands was as infatuated as it could be, but Charles, with his unerring instinct for doing the wrong thing, followed it. On May 5th, he summoned the Commons to the bar of the House of Lords, and in a speech of angry and open contempt dissolved the Short Parliament. It had sat for three weeks.

But contempt could no longer serve Charles's turn. The following months were to see his last desperate effort to govern by arbitrary enactment; and then the breach was to be irreparable. The King's conduct on the termination of the Short Parliament was marked by what can only be termed demoniac stupidity. Nothing could be more legible than the writing that was inexorably tracing itself on the wall, and yet he could not or would not read it. Mobs assembled in the streets murmuring imprecations; placards were paraded denouncing Laud as anti-Christ; the gates of Lambeth were threatened; ballad-singers offended the precincts of Whitehall with most unkingly burdens; strange drums broke the silence of the city nights. And in face of it all, with a courage too gross for sanity, Charles again placed some of the banished members under arrest, caused the persons

of suspect noblemen to be searched for treasonable papers, issued an edict expressly declaring that he was "accountable to God alone," set all his machinery to work to enforce the payment of Ship Money and other imposts, and made bemused preparations to follow the grotesque Scotch adventure of the preceding year with another Bishop's War. The second exploit ended even more ingloriously than the first. The Scots were neither to be coerced by episcopal argument, nor defeated in the field by Charles's exceedingly ragged regiments. The King of England returned to London with all his boasting quelled in public derision; and in the meantime the Puritan leaders made no effort to conceal the fact that they were negotiating with commissioners from Scotland. The leaders of these conventions let it be known that the King was discredited in all parts of his kingdom. In the last extremity of autocratic power, Charles was reduced to what he had irretrievably made the indignity of summoning Parliament once more. Not to do this was to be left utterly impotent in his own country; to do it was to sanction his own destruction. In November 1640 the Long Parliament met at Westminster. It was to survive unexampled passions and crises for nearly thirteen years.

X

ASSEMBLING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT. THE REPRESENTATIVE PURITAN

X

ASSEMBLING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT. THE REPRESENTATIVE PURITAN

WHAT happened during this period was that a King, his chief Minister of State, and the head of his Church, were brought to the scaffold; that the blood of many thousands of eminent and obscure Englishmen was spilt in the midst of English fields that are familiarly and lovingly known to us all to-day, often with son met against father, and brother against brother; and that the theory of government in England was with tragic severity revised to the account of all coming generations. But the way in which these things happened is a tale of infinitely complex policy and action. The events upon which history generalises, sometimes significantly and sometimes not, were composed of innumerable and intimate particulars that are now and for ever beyond particularisation. In those years, every town and hamlet and acre knew its own version of a conflict that made the remotest bridle path a likely place of ambush. Out of the vortex certain cardinal results emerged as

memorable, but the chronicles of these alone offer a vast and often confused theme for investigation. Our business is to attempt such a summary as will best exhibit Oliver's character.

There are in this respect two considerations of the highest importance to be borne in mind. The first is that Oliver Cromwell was, in a very special sense, the product of his age, a Representative Man. His was no remote and lonely genius, patiently bringing to maturity the fruits of its own speculation, satisfied in the pursuit of truth that others might or might not see. Nor was his career inspired by the personal desire for eminence, the zest for directing vast energies with reference to no particular purpose, the joy of subjecting empires to his power and caprice. He was neither poet nor adventurer. In his public life, by which he is remembered, while he gave official employment to Milton, whom he revered, he was as incapable of emulating Milton's sublime detachments, as he was of sharing such restless ambitions as those that made and broke Napoleon, who he would have despised. Cromwell was the commanding symbol in action of specific necessities at a specific time. He did not make the Puritan revolution, but was its most significant expression. He used no ingenuity to contrive the conditions under which he came into the world's notice, but was

himself an effect of those conditions as he was in the end their chief instrument. If Charles and Wentworth and Laud had been able and willing to compromise with the spirit that they so continually incited to revolt, it is almost certain that Cromwell would have remained an obscure farmer taking an inconspicuous place in public affairs. It was only when the principles for which he stood as the private member of a party were in the last extremity of danger, that he began to assert his unequalled powers of leadership. For unequalled, in the sense that they knew no reverses, they were. At the assembling of the Long Parliament he was a man of forty, with no more experience of statesmanship than had been afforded by three brief sessions at Westminster in the political ranks, with his gift for organisation tried only by the management of a few farm hands, a small estate, and his colleagues on local committees, and with no practical knowledge whatever of arms. Within less than ten years he had translated the conscience of a people into terms of terrible but disciplined authority, was directing the national diplomacy, and had led an army of his own making through a succession of desperate campaigns without once suffering defeat. All this he accomplished directly as the representative Puritan. It is, therefore, impossible to disso-

ciate him at any moment of his story from the beliefs and passions and circumstances upon which Puritanism was founded. It was in the personal example of Cromwell that the movement achieved its most coherent mastery, but without the movement Cromwell could have had no meaning. It is for this reason that, although in 1640 he had done nothing to suggest his coming ascendency, it has been necessary to trace with some care the progress of events in which he was but a subordinate agent. The development of Puritanism up to 1640 was Cromwell's development, as it was that of thousands of other undistinguished citizens, though as it happened in his case with signal consequences. We can only realise the essential features of his earlier years by realising the conditions under which he matured and the aspirations that he was taught to cherish. Our very limited knowledge of his personal life at Huntingdon and St. Ives and Ely, leaves us none the less certain as to the kind of man he was when he first began to be a noted public influence. We know clearly the Puritan temper and faith, and the occasions by which they had been tested, and knowing them we know Cromwell as he was when he came up to London for the second time as member for Cambridge.

The other consideration to be remembered

always in approaching Cromwell, is that first and last he was a man of action. Capable as he was of deep intellectual reserve, hungry for lonely communings of the spirit, and often weary of the conflict that gave him no respite, his life, once he had forsaken the quiet of his farms, was one of turbulent and incessant doing. Violent and incalculable political crises, necessitating ever fresh improvisation and renewed tenacity, in themselves kept the string sufficiently taut. But Cromwell was not only a chief participator in these; he conceived a new army model, turned recruiting officer, raised one of the most efficient fighting forces known to military history, made himself a master of strategy and tactics, and himself fought in command from one victorious field to another. Utterly insensible to the appeal of conquest for its own sake, and profoundly inspired by an ideal, he was yet called upon to vindicate it in years of unremitting action. It is by action, at Westminster, under arms, in council, and finally as the executive head of the state, that the whole definition of his character is governed.

To remember this is important for this reason. No man is in his action infallibly consistent, logical, prudent. The creative processes of art and philosophy are such that by them a man may hope to give nothing of himself to the

world but the best. He can labour, often with success, to keep his imperfections out of the work by which he is revealed to us. It is a poor curiosity that asks whether the artist in his life is better or worse than his fellows; the more so as in any case we may be sure that he is neither. All that we need to know is that he is allowed, for his comfort and ours, to purge some part of himself of its grossness and save it from mortality. No great artist may hope to equal the perfection of his own art, and it is his happy fortune that by his art he is known. When, however, a man with the arresting quality of genius, expresses himself not in art but in action, he invites and has to endure a much more intimate scrutiny. His whole life is put forward for our analysis, and no life can survive that ordeal with an unblemished account. The man of action can effect no concealments, make no perfect abstract of himself. We know him by all his actions, not merely by his good and great and generous ones, and some will inevitably do his reputation no good. It is true that sometimes our interest is confined to the action of such a man in a limited range, as in the case of the soldier or sailor whose martial exploits alone are of any interest to the world. But when the man of action comes prominently into national affairs, and influences policy as

well as the fortunes of the field, he has to abide the larger audit. And Cromwell, more perhaps than any other figure in our history, is subject to this most searching of all standards. He was a man phenomenally engaged in action, and since he was a presiding force not merely in policy, but in the spiritual and domestic life of a nation critically beset, no phase or turn of that action can escape attention. We shall find that Cromwell sometimes did things that it would be difficult to defend, if it were our place to defend them. Not often, we think, unaccountable things, but things that lend some colour to his own protestations of insufficiency. And what then? We do not find in Cromwell the man who, alone among men, had no cause to ask to be forgiven his trespasses. We merely find in him a man who on the whole did more memorably great and beneficent things for his country, who was better able to bear the burden of his acknowledged and not inconsiderable trespasses, than any other Englishman who has proved his faith in his deeds.

XI

EXECUTION OF STRAFFORD
THE GRAND REMONSTRANCE

XI

EXECUTION OF STRAFFORD. THE GRAND REMONSTRANCE

On April 11th, 1640, the royalist John Evelyn wrote in his diary, "I went to London to see the solemnity of his Majesty's riding through the city in state to the Short Parliament, which began the 13th following—a very glorious and magnificent sight. The King circled with his royal diadem and the affections of his people. . . . Upon May the 5th following, was the Parliament unhappily dissolved." Seven months later, on October 30th, he writes (from some date retrospectively, as was his practice), "I saw his Majesty, coming from his Northern expedition, ride in pomp and a kind of ovation, with all the marks of a happy peace, restored to the affections of his people, being conducted through London with a most splendid cavalcade; and on the 3rd November following (a day never to be mentioned without a curse) to that long ungrateful, foolish, and fatal Parliament, the beginning of all our sorrow for twenty years after, and the period of

the most unhappy monarch in the world." How sincerely, how tragically, do the words of the gentle diarist drift down to us from those times. How eagerly could we have pressed with him to see the splendid cavalcade, if that had been all. And how tarnished and ashen does that splendour seem when we know more than Evelyn wished to know. A fatal Parliament indeed, if the word means charged with fate. But the splendour of that cavalcade could not co-exist with a splendid England, and it was swept away. And let us be clear as to what the splendour really was. It is part of the technique of anti-Puritan writers to represent the cavaliers as standing, with all their faults, for a liberal and cultured way of life against the darkness of fanaticism. It may be remarked that no rational being would for a moment tolerate the mouthing bigots who, by the report of these enthusiasts, were the progenitors of English Puritanism. One concrete example may serve to illuminate the common confusion. It is asked by the cavaliers, how can a liberal modern mind protest in the name of a party that opposed Laud's very enlightened introduction —or re-introduction—of the measure sanctioning, or indeed enjoining, Sunday sports? The answer is to be found in the actual terms of the proclamation, which do not always seem to have

been consulted. There is revealed the fact that only such people were enjoined, or even allowed, to take these pleasures of a Sunday, as had attended divine service in the regulation Church of England. Which makes a difference.

Cromwell seems to have come into no prominence during the first months of the Long Parliament. At the time of the passing of the Grand Remonstrance, in November 1641, Clarendon refers to him as being then "little taken notice of." But there is evidence that he was attending closely to the business of the House, if at present with no great celebrity. A few days after Parliament had met he was put in charge of the petition of John Lilburne, of whose treatment by the Star Chamber we have already heard, and on this occasion he makes a first and graphic appearance in the memoirs of the time. The passage from Sir Philip Warwick's * journal is well known, but not too well for repetition here: "The first time I ever took notice of Mr. Cromwell . . . I came into the House . . . and perceived a gentleman speaking, whom I knew not, very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country-tailor; his linen was plain, and not very clean;

* Warwick was royalist member for Radnor, and a devoted cavalier until his death in 1683. In 1640 he was thirty years of age.

and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar. . . . His stature was of a good size; his sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swoln and reddish, his voice sharp and untuneable, and his eloquence full of fervour. For the subject matter would not bear much of reason; it being on behalf of a servant of Mr. Prynne's [Lilburne] who had dispensed libels; I sincerely profess, it lessened much my reverence unto that Great Council, for this gentleman was very much hearkened unto."

It was the hearkening unto these homespun, argumentative, ignorant gentlemen that had for so long been distasteful to Wentworth, now Lord Strafford. So distasteful, indeed, that for years he had persuaded his master not to hearken unto them at all, and with cold and uniform insolence had let it be known that he did not consider what they had to say to be of the smallest importance to anybody. Their part was a becoming docility towards their betters who knew the arts of government. Wentworth had done a very bad job with considerable efficiency. His vision was fatally narrow in that it wholly disregarded the rising spirit of the age, but within that vision he worked shrewdly, disinterestedly, and with uncommon application. Apart from his fundamental misconcep-

tions, what he designed he was in general able to carry out. So that while men had hated and despised Buckingham, they hated and feared Strafford. So long as it was possible to ignore the gathering storm, he could deceive the Court and himself that they were equal to all emergencies. But now the storm had broken. These loutish fellows from the country, with untuneable voices and no administrative qualifications, had thrust themselves again into the places of authority. And the first measure to which they addressed themselves, after some ecclesiastical skirmishing, was the impeachment of the man who had defied them and repudiated the claims of the people to preside over their own destinies.

The legal ground had to be shifted before the Commons accomplished their purpose, and a Bill of Attainder against Strafford was substituted for the process of impeachment by law. The attack was determined, but Strafford defended himself with great courage and resource, and had not the mood of the Commons been stiffened in the closing stages of the trial by the discovery of the Army Plot, it is possible that he would have escaped. When, however, it was found that Charles was intriguing with certain army leaders to rescue Strafford and place him at the head of a military rising

against Parliament, Pym and his colleagues pushed on the Bill with irresistible energy. On May 8th, 1641, it was forced through the Lords. For two days the King, in an agony of indecision, withheld the royal assent, while popular clamour round the palace demanded retribution. It is pleaded in Charles's behalf that his position was one of extreme difficulty and danger. It was. But it is in such crises that heroic fortitude is born. No one could tell what the consequences might be if Charles refused to sacrifice the man who had at least been magnificently loyal to him. He dared not face the risk, and late on Sunday evening, May 9th, he signed his friend's death warrant. On May 12th, Strafford was executed on Tower Hill, within a few yards of the cell where Archbishop Laud was already waiting against the day four years later when he should be led out, a brave foolish old man, to meet a similar fate with no less intrepidity.

At the time of Strafford's death Charles was compelled to accept a further drastic limitation of his powers. A Bill was passed whereby Parliament could not henceforward be dissolved without its own consent, and became law. Thus with his only capable Minister of State gone, with his most effective ecclesiastical adviser out of reach, and his control over Parliament an-

nulled, there was nothing left for him but to seize any chance opportunities that occasion might offer. His chief hope lay in dissensions that were already beginning to embarrass the Puritan party itself. Once Laud's power was curtailed, the nonconformist sects found themselves occupied with distracting differences of their own. By concentrating attention on these, Charles might look for a rally of royalist and High Church forces that would enable him to hold his own yet. It was a forlorn expedient, but there was no other left. The Parliament leaders were by now in constant communication with the Scotch presbyterians. In August Charles went north again, to see what crumbs of comfort he also might pick up in that quarter, leaving the Puritans in daily debate at Westminster, united in a common offensive on Bishops, divided on a dozen problems of Church establishment and government. Cromwell and Vane were responsible for the introduction of a bill for the total abolition of episcopacy—the Root-and-Branch. When asked what he would put in the place of bishops, Cromwell replied that he was not sure what he wanted, but he knew what could no longer be endured. The King's departure roused new suspicions as to what he was about, the call for harmony reasserted itself, and the Bill was dropped. In Sep-

tember the House went into recess, and for six weeks Cromwell was back at Ely again. On October 20th Parliament re-assembled, and learnt that Charles had found a few crumbs. The Scots were not, it seemed, too satisfied with the promises of their new friends at Westminster, and some of them were inclined to negotiate again with a king who was at all times ready to promise anything. Also news came of a Catholic insurrection in Ireland, in which some thousands of Protestants were massacred. Charles issued another of his manifestos, admonishing the Lords not to encourage the Commons in any tampering with Church discipline, and numbers of Episcopalian sympathisers who had hitherto been politically neutral, openly declared themselves Royalist. Alarmed by all these symptoms of a decline in their newly won privileges, the Commons decided to make another demonstration of popular rights, and in November the Grand Remonstrance was laid before the House.

In it were recited the misdeeds of Charles's reign, the services of Parliament to English liberty, and proposals for lasting reform. The instrument was an elaboration of the Petition of Right, supported by an immensely increased authority. But its passage through the House was by no means easy, a further indication that

the King was recovering lost ground. Strafford had been condemned in May by two hundred and four votes to fifty-nine; it was only after desperate advocacy that in November the Grand Remonstrance was passed by one hundred and fifty-nine votes to one hundred and forty-eight. The scene was one of the most violent ever witnessed in the House, and as it closed, Cromwell is reported by Clarendon to have said to Falkland, "If the Remonstrance had been rejected, I would have sold all that I have to-morrow morning, and never have seen England more; and I know that there are many other honest men of the same resolution." Upon which Clarendon observes, "So near was the poor Kingdom at that time to its deliverance."

But small as the majority was it was sufficient. Four days later, Charles returned from Scotland, and the Remonstrance was presented to him. He took such stock as he could of public feeling, and the result, in the City especially, was not too discouraging. He affected to treat the Remonstrance as negligible, and started clandestine shufflings with the defences of London. Thoroughly alarmed, Parliament sought to strengthen its hand by ejecting the Bishops from the Lords, and succeeded in getting thirteen of them impeached and locked up. It was rumoured that the next mark of Puritan attack

was to be no less a person than the Queen, who not without reason was suspected of regarding the tragic plight of her Protestant subjects in Ireland with some satisfaction, and of tampering with the army. Charles retaliated by an act of stark folly. On January 3rd, 1642, the Attorney General rose in the House at his bidding, and named five members, Pym, Hampden, Hazlerigg, Holles and Strode, on a charge of high treason. The general stupefaction deepened as the King, impatient of what he conceived to be an unwarrantable delay in getting forward with the business, sent his Sergeant-at-Arm to arrest the accused members. Lords and Commons alike sent an indignant protest to Whitehall against this frantic proceeding. Whereupon Charles became more frantic still, and the next day rode down in his coach to Westminster at the head of four hundred soldiers to effect the arrest himself. His men were not there, and he walked out of a House ringing with cries of "Privilege." And even as he was leaving he had the sublime audacity to "assure them," as Clarendon tells us, "in the word of a King, that he never intended any force, but would proceed against them in a fair and legal way." A week later he had left London, and preparations for the Civil War had begun.

XII

THE FIRST CIVIL WAR. EDGEHILL. THE EASTERN ASSOCIATION

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THE FIRST CIVIL WAR. EDGEHILL. THE EASTERN ASSOCIATION

THROUGH a long term of years the issues upon which the war was to be fought had been defining themselves. They were now clear. The distribution of forces was a slow and incalculable process; the nearest ties of kinship were broken, and discord was set between interests that had worked together for generations. Often during the struggle, as is the case in every war, the aims of both parties became confused, and sometimes demoralised. Narrow-minded pedants, ignorant coxcombs, quacks, canteen sharpers, political dodgers, place-seekers and time servers, were plentiful on both sides. But we have not to judge the Royalist and Puritan causes by their disreputable elements. For the King, as against him, were many thousands of staunch, chivalrous, and incorruptible men drawn from all classes. It was because the Puritans laboured the more exactingly to encourage and discipline their finer qualities and to purify their morale, that they in the end drove their

no less gallant but far less resolute enemies from the field. Roughly speaking, the King's army and supporters consisted of those sections of the nobility and gentry that were not politically minded, and had a long loyalist tradition in their families and on their estates; members of the Episcopalian Church; Catholics who hoped, in any new settlement that should follow the King's victory, for many favours by the influence of Henrietta Maria; certain vested interests of office; and a considerable train of free-lance adventurers who had no particular principles, but had learnt in Continental wars and elsewhere a code of honour that made them trustworthy enough once their allegiance had been given. The purposes for which this somewhat invertebrate association fought were the establishment of the theory of divine right, of the King's absolute control over the machinery of government, and of the arbitrary subjection of all political and religious opinion to the person of the Crown and the courts of the State Church respectively. The Puritan party consisted of a majority in both houses of Parliament; the chief influences in the City, which meant most of the traders throughout the country; such of the nobility as had been convinced by recent experience of public affairs that the freedom of the average citizen was their free-

dom also—a very numerous and powerful body; most of the professional classes outside Crown employment; the squirearchy almost to a man and by far the greater part of the artisans and yeomen. They stood for political rights of the people expressed through Parliament, and for liberty of opinion in religion. Often in the heat of conflict they betrayed their own faith, but this faith it was that was the mainspring of their action, and that they finally vindicated as an enduring principle of English life.

When the King fled from London, Parliament at once proceeded to organise its forces for the field. Already in February it is the "Commonwealth" to which "Mr. Cromwell offers to lend three hundred pounds" for such measures of defence or offence as may seem necessary. Hampden's contribution on this occasion is a thousand pounds. In July, Cromwell is raising two volunteer companies in Cambridge, and lends another hundred pounds to that end. A month later he has seized the Magazine in the castle of that town, and stopped some twenty thousand pounds worth of plate from being conveyed from the University to the King's uses. The parliamentary army is placed under the command of the Earl of Essex, whose general of horse, the new Earl of Bedford, is appointing many captains of troops; in September

Oliver Cromwell is given such a commission, his troop being number sixty-seven, and consisting of sixty men. In troop number eight his eldest son is a cornet. In the meantime the King also was assembling his arms. Not just now favouring the neighbourhood of London, he journeyed north again, gathering some momentum as he went. At Hull he was refused entrance to the city by a parliamentarian governor, and there on July 15th the first skirmishing of the war took place. On August 22nd the royal standard was raised at Nottingham, and after two months of manœuvring on both sides the battle of Edgehill in Warwickshire was fought, October 23rd, 1642.

The result was indecisive. Each army numbered about fourteen thousand men, and each claimed the victory. Cromwell was there with his troop. So also was Colonel Hampden of the infantry, who coming late into the action from Stratford-on-Avon with his Buckinghamshire green coats helped to head off one of Rupert's charges. The Parliament had the advantage in arms and equipment, the King in cavalry. The losses were variously computed, but the total casualties seem to have amounted to not less than four thousand. As night fell upon this calamity that had shaken the pastoral peace of the low-lying midland hills, a Puritan

trooper lit a fire on Beacon Hill by Burton Dassett, a pre-arranged signal that the King's progress had been checked. It is said that some shepherds at Ivinghoe saw the distant point of light thirty miles away, and signalled in turn to sentinels at Harrow-on-the-Hill, whence the news was taken by waiting horsemen to London. But of all the men in that battle, none knew better than Cromwell that there was as yet no victory to celebrate. It was then that he told Hampden that if they were to succeed against the quality and courage of the King's arms they must bring into their own fighting ranks the very flower of Puritan manhood. He would have such men alone as would in the name of God discover such a spirit as their enemies had that day shown in the name of the King. Hampden agreed, but with some scepticism. It was a right policy, but practicable? However, he believed in this cousin of his. Not so long since, a friend had enquired in the House, "Pray, Mr. Hampden, who is that man? For I see he is on our side by his speaking so warmly to-day." And according to his biographer, Hampden replied, "That sloven whom you see before you hath no ornament in his speech, but if we should ever come to a breach with the King—which God forbid—that sloven will be the greatest man in England." Now, at the end

of 1642, after Edgehill, Oliver began to show by unsleeping enterprise, unerring fixity of aim, an inspired sense of vocation, that Hampden's confidence was not misplaced. He began to create the army of his ideal.

All moral considerations apart, Cromwell's achievement of this purpose is one of the romantic wonders of history. Nothing more stirring is to be found in the legendary chronicles. County Associations were formed for the raising and training of troops. In the Eastern Association Cromwell, burning with the lessons of Edgehill, at once took a prominent place; very rapidly the most prominent. He pleaded, exhorted, threatened, prayed, challenged, and rewarded. Also he worked incessantly to learn all he could of military theory and practice. His promotion to a colonelcy widened his authority, and gave him greater scope. In 1643 he was yet again advanced in service, being appointed Governor of the Isle of Ely by Parliament. Throughout this year, while the main movement of the war was going on in the south-west, lower midlands, and north of England, Cromwell was occupied in organising the forces of the Eastern Association, intermittently engaged in outlying actions on a small scale, at Grantham, Stamford, Gainsborough and elsewhere. There are frequent appeals from him

to Deputy-Lieutenants, Mayors, and other competent authorities, for pay due to his troops. "I beseech you hasten to supply to us: forget not money. . . . Lay not too much upon the back of a poor gentleman, who desires, without much noise, to lay down his life, and bleed the last drop to serve the Cause and you. I ask not your money for myself: if that were my end and hope, viz. the pay of my place—I would not open my mouth at this time—I desire to deny myself; but others will not be satisfied. Forget not your prayers. Gentlemen, I am yours, Oliver Cromwell." Sometimes he had to meet the claims of destitute soldiers out of his own pocket. On one occasion he explained that he could do no more, having already laid out between eleven and twelve hundred pounds in this way, and "my estate is little." But in face of all difficulties, he managed in a few months to make his district much spoken of everywhere for discipline, efficiency, equipment, and zeal. He encouraged support from all quarters, providing only that the givers were "honest godly men"; or women either for the matter of that, there being a touching little letter of his to some nameless chairman or what not of a group of "Young Men and Maids" who desired to subscribe Twelve-score Pounds towards raising a company of musketeers; he advises that the

money be spent towards a troop of horse instead.

In those Lincolnshire skirmishes Cromwell was often in command of the small Puritan forces engaged, and already he was noted for the success that was never once in the coming years to fail his leadership in the field. His discipline was severe; but easily imposed, since his men were of the same mind as himself. They learnt now by personal contact that the reputation of Mr. Cromwell of Huntingdon and St. Ives and Ely, as a fearless and honest Puritan and a man very hard to beat or brow-beat, was a just one. And as he and they together got their organisation going with clear vision and a thoroughly firm hand on themselves, they could say with simple confidence, in his words, "There is nothing to be feared but our own sin and sloth." In September Oliver could write, "I have a lovely company; you would respect them did you know them."

Throughout 1643 the war followed an indeterminate course, the armies drifting about the shires waiting on each other's movements and seldom coming to grips, and then, as at Newbury, with inconclusive results. The King made overtures to Parliament, much to the apprehension of the army in which the real Puritan power was now concentrating. Not again un-

til terms could be dictated were terms to be discussed. On an early morning in mid-June, as Rupert and a small parliamentary force fought among the standing corn across the broad unenclosed farmlands known as Chalgrove Field, by the little town of Watlington in Oxfordshire, John Hampden received the wound of which six days later he died in his fiftieth year, murmuring, "O Lord, level in the dust those who would rob the people of their liberty." In December John Pym, ten years older, the greatest parliamentarian statesman that the new order had seen, and a leader whom every Puritan revered, followed Hampden, wasted by disease and worn out by ardours that he could never subdue. His last act was to induce Parliament to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, whereby Presbyterianism was to become the religion of "the three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland," on the understanding that the Scots were to support the parliamentary arms. The consequences of this agreement were later to reverberate in the clash between an Independent army and a Presbyterian House, but at present the new Independents, Cromwell among them, had not advanced beyond the common distrust of Popes and Bishops, and when orders were given that all Laudian and such-like practices in the Church were to be abolished,

Oliver was all for obeying them. As we have suggested before, the mood had nothing to do with religious toleration. There was no time in his life when Cromwell would not have been perfectly content to let any man burn as many candles and say as many masses as he wished, if that had been all. But these things went with a policy of which the results were already sufficiently disastrous. When, therefore, early in 1644, the incumbent of Ely Cathedral was found to be conducting the proscribed forms, Cromwell as governor of the town sent him a polite but unequivocal note inviting him to desist. This producing no effect, Cromwell took the first opportunity of walking into the cathedral during service with a military guard, and announcing that he was authorised to dismiss the congregation. Having done so, he stood aside to allow a quiet dispersal, and the Reverend Mr. Hitch taking this to be a sign of irresolution, returned to his ritual, whereupon with no irresolution at all Oliver cried out, "Leave off your fooling and come down, Sir." As Mr. Hitch then decided to do.

XIII

THE IRONSIDES. MARSTON MOOR AND NASEBY. FIRST CIVIL WAR ENDS

XIII

THE IRONSIDES. MARSTON MOOR AND NASEBY. FIRST CIVIL WAR ENDS

THE new year, 1644, found Cromwell still employed in training his troops under the Eastern Association, adding to their numbers, bettering their condition, and learning with them something of active warfare. All that had been asked of them hitherto they had given without stint, and Cromwell was daily growing more confident that no demands would ever find them wanting. He is now Lieutenant-General, and can tell a Major-General who has suspended a Lieutenant-Colonel for holding religious views that he, the Major-General, did not esteem, that "the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions"; further, that his correspondent should "take heed of being sharp . . . against those to whom you can object little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion." Here is a sufficient answer to any who may regard the scene in Ely cathedral as nothing but a display of bigotry.

As summer came on, the opposing forces slowly converged from all quarters upon a point in Yorkshire. The Puritans were now in touch with the Scots, who had crossed the border early in the year. At the end of June the city of York, holding out for the King and now invested, was relieved by Rupert at the head of his undefeated cavalry. The besiegers drew off and joined the main parliamentary army at Long Marston, eight miles west of the city. On Tuesday, July 2nd, the Royalists, under William Cavendish, Marquis of Newcastle, now liberated from York, with Rupert in command of the horse, gathered over against them on the moor in the hot morning. Through the day the two armies watched each other, a long dyke between them, preparing their order of battle, the lines flowing and receding in trial formations. In the late afternoon Newcastle decided that there would be no action that day, and withdrew to his coach. But the parliamentary leaders decided otherwise, and at seven o'clock in the evening the assault was delivered.

The Puritan army numbered twenty-seven thousand men, twenty thousand of whom were infantry; the King's but eighteen thousand, with eleven thousand infantry. Thus on each side the cavalry, on whom in those days the fortune of battle chiefly depended, numbered seven

thousand. The Puritan horsemen were as yet untried in any major action; Rupert's had made themselves feared by a succession of dashing exploits that had never yet failed to retrieve the King's misfortunes in the field. But an unknown factor was here to prove itself for the first time. The Puritan left and centre broke at the first impact, and something like two-thirds of their force was reduced to what threatened to become a rout. But on the right two thousand five hundred men from the Eastern Association under Cromwell withstood every onset of Rupert's brilliant courage. They did more. Yard by yard they turned defence into attack, and beat Rupert back into the first reverse he had ever known. As the summer night fell the prince was in flight with six thousand of his hitherto invincible troopers, and Cromwell had swung round to save the battle in the centre. Almost at the moment of defeat Rupert exclaimed in the face of his vanquisher "Ironsides!" and gave a name to English history. By ten o'clock Cromwell had recovered all the lost positions, broken the last efforts at resistance, scattered the King's army, and ruined his cause forever in the north. "God made them as stubble to our swords." Cromwell's men had become veterans in a day. Henceforward the

presence of the Ironsides in the field was an ever mounting terror to all cavalier pretensions.

Cromwell's one purpose now was to secure an absolute ascendency in arms. To this he applied his genius with an energy that swept aside all opposition. Having struck his decisive blow in the north, he looked towards the south and west, where Royalist hopes, though gravely impaired by news of Marston Moor, were still finding encouragement. There he read nothing but inert mismanagement in the Puritan command, and his dissatisfaction with the state of the army in general reached a climax when at the second battle of Newbury, late in October, Essex from the west and Manchester from the victory that he had done little to gain in the north, contrived by bad strategy and worse tactics (Essex was not present at the battle) to lose an opportunity that Cromwell and the other more enterprising leaders were eager to take. At the end of November Cromwell, returning for a brief appearance in the House, formally charged Manchester with neglect and inefficiency. He did not press the case to an issue, fearing to involve the party in fresh personal disputes at a moment when unity was imperative, but the protest had been made and he knew that it could not be unheeded. The outcome was that on December 9th the Self-Denying Ordinance

passed both Houses, Cromwell speaking twice during the debate in support of the measure. By its provision all members of Parliament, Lords and Commons, were to resign their commissions, and the army was to be officered according to the New Model that had come into being under Cromwell and his Eastern Association. It was the most convenient way available of clearing out Essex, Manchester, and their like without unfairness to men who after all had not sought positions for which they were unqualified. Incidentally, it involved the dismissal of many able men from the service, Cromwell himself among them, but by general agreement the removal of incompetents from the highest places was worth even that sacrifice. Had this opinion held, the consequences might well have been fatal; but this was not to be. While the new ordinance was being put into effect, Cromwell was employed on a western expedition, at the successful conclusion of which, in April 1645, he was preparing to take leave of Fairfax, the new commander-in-chief, at Windsor, when he received orders from the Committee of Both Kingdoms to remain in the field. Parliament in fact had no intention of losing their ablest officer, and were keeping the post of cavalry commander-in-chief open until such time as they could exempt him from

the ordinance without seeming to be conspiring with its originator.

In May and June Cromwell was constantly on the move, now attacking Royalist positions along the Thames country, now back in the Isle of Ely calling in recruits, establishing lines of communication, perfecting his New Model. Fairfax was besieging Oxford, and the King marching about the midlands with nobody knew what objective. Early in June it seemed that he was likely to move against the Eastern Association, and Cromwell at Cambridge joined in proclamations for defence, seeing to it himself that they were duly obeyed. On the 6th, word came that the royal army was at Market Harborough in Leicestershire, fifty miles away, and advancing eastwards. An appeal was sent to Fairfax for help. In response Fairfax left Oxford in pursuit of the King, and through Parliament instructed Cromwell to come westward to meet him. The vacant post was filled, and the Ironsides moved towards their rendezvous. There were six hundred of them, six hundred, that is, of Cromwell's Own. On June 12th, Fairfax drew up behind the King at the village of Naseby in Northamptonshire. Some hours later Cromwell rode into the camp, and took command of the entire Puritan horse, six thou-

sand of them all told. On the morning of the 14th Charles attacked.

As at Marston Moor, the Roundheads had a considerable advantage in numbers: eight thousand foot and six thousand horse against three thousand five hundred foot and four thousand horse. But the King's army, especially in its cavalry, many of whom had seen foreign service, were picked and experienced men, while the Puritans had in their ranks some thousands of raw untrained troops. The New Model had as yet affected but a small part of the army. As at Marston Moor, one wing and the centre broke before the Royalist dash; and as at Marston Moor one wing, this time the right, stood unshakably under the example of Cromwell and his Ironsides. In three hours these men had once again turned the whole fortune of battle, and the King's army was scattered in irreparable confusion. He was never again to face his enemies in action.

As an offensive force with any hope of final victory the Royalists had ceased to exist, but there was still much for the Puritans to do before the last resistance was quelled. For nearly another year Cromwell was engaged in breaking up the remaining opposition in the south-west, and in reducing such cavalier strongholds as Winchester, Bristol and Basing. He did the

work thoroughly, grimly even, but he never allowed severity to become undisciplined. Honourable terms and safe conduct were given when the enemy would accept them, as at Langford House near Salisbury. His storming was terrible, but never delivered until repeated offers of peaceable negotiations had been made. At Winchester, for example, he summoned the castle to surrender, and was denied. He trained his guns, and after one round, sent a second summons, with the same result. He then effected a breach, and the governor thereupon, before the assault, asked for a parley. Cromwell consented, and articles were agreed upon. When the club-men, irregular bands of countrymen armed with clubs professedly as a protection against the excesses of both armies, but in fact a Royalist organisation, hovered round his army two or three thousand strong and indulged in what by the modern equivalent would be sniping by civilians, he had three hundred of them arrested, and having scolded them soundly, sent them home. Licence among his own troops he would never tolerate. On one occasion some of his prisoners complained of unlawful plundering. He sent six accused men to trial by court martial. All were found guilty, and one by lot was hanged, the others being handed over to the Royalist Governor of Oxford: who, however,

sent them back. Occasions for such rigour in his camp were rare, but he did not shrink from them when they arose. Or we may believe that he did indeed shrink from them, for Cromwell adored his soldiers, truly his brothers-in-arms. But shrinking, he steeled himself nevertheless. The servants of God must be not only above fear but above reproach. By the spring of 1646 the last Royalist had been driven from the field. In June the last garrison in being surrendered at Oxford. The King had already escaped in disguise to the north and placed himself in the hands of the Scots. The young Prince of Wales had left the country. The triumph of the Parliament was complete, and the first civil war was over.

XIV

THE ARMY AND THE PARLIAMENT

XIV

THE ARMY AND THE PARLIAMENT

AND yet the triumph was not the Parliament's, but the army's. In a directly personal sense it was Cromwell's, for his above all others had been the genius that had given the army its character and power. And already the tension between Parliament and army was becoming acute. After Naseby, Oliver had written to the Speaker of the House, "Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you, in the name of God, not to discourage them." Do not, for example, impose a Presbyterian covenant on men who have a conscience against it. After Bristol, he wrote again to the Speaker, "It may be thought that some praises are due to those gallant men of whose valour so much mention is made. . . . It is their joy that they are instruments of God's glory and their country's good . . . Presbyterians, Independents, all here have the same spirit of faith and prayer . . . pity it is it should be otherwise anywhere." A pity, that is to say, that Presbyterian busybodies in high places

could not take a hint from honest Presbyterian soldiers, and keep their Presbyterianism to themselves. And again, to an acquaintance in Norfolk whose intervention in some local squall he was soliciting, "Sir, this is a quarrelsome age; and the anger seems to me to be the worse, where the ground is difference of opinion." The first civil war was over, but this question of opinion had now to be fought out in the councils of the victors. In the dispute, Cromwell's Independence found a valuable ally in a new son-in-law that he had recently acquired. In April 1645, his daughter Bridget was married to Henry Ireton, who had served notably under Oliver at Naseby and elsewhere. He was now thirty-four, and his bride twenty-one.

In the middle of this year Cromwell was back at his business in the House. There he watched the rising jealousy between the Commons and the army with growing anxiety and impatience. "Never were the spirits of men more embittered than now," he exclaims sadly enough in a letter to Fairfax. "Sir, it's good the heart be fixed against all this." Then, loyal to his hope after four years of bloody campaigning, "The naked simplicity of Christ . . . will overcome all this." That, and nothing else; if men would only return to it. For months the differences smouldered at the point of kindling into conflagra-

tion. The Presbyterians in Parliament were backed by the City, which wanted peace for economic reasons, and saw the surest way to this in disbanding the army and patching up some sort of a treaty with the King. But neither Parliament nor City seemed able to realise that in the New Model they had not to deal with hordes of hired mercenaries or even conscribed soldiers, but with the flower of the thinking youth and middle-aged manhood of the nation, who had taken up arms for a definite purpose. That purpose was liberty, and at present there was no assurance of it. Until there was the army had no intention whatever of being sent home by their obliged and humble servants. And in the background of this confusion flitted the shadowy figure of the fugitive King of England himself.

Not that he was in fact fugitive any longer, being a prisoner. When he first placed himself, as he put it, under the protection of the Scots early in 1646, they had stated their terms. He was to take the Covenant, and return to the throne pledged to the Presbyterian Church for England. This he declined to do, and thereby laid the foundation for the legend of his martyrdom. That Charles would never accept Presbyterianism in place of his own Church is true, but that his decision at this time was dic-

tated by that loyalty, is not. To have accepted the Scotch proposals would have been a final defiance of the New Model army, and he had had a great deal more than enough of that. Moreover, in spite of all his experience, he could still persuade himself that he was a necessary part of the State, and that if he could only hold his hand long and astutely enough the State would presently come to him cap in hand. He saw, what everyone saw, that the Presbyterians and Independents in England were at dangerous odds, and might at any moment proceed to destroy each other. That, he conceived, would be his opportunity. In the meantime, he would wait with the Scots, and say nothing.

A nimble device, but reckoning without his Scots, who grew tired of waiting, and told their friends at Westminster that if arrears of army pay were forthcoming, they, the Scots, would be very happy to part with their uninvited guest. The Parliament, which, its internal dissensions notwithstanding, was still the agent of Puritan England, accepted the offer, and sent commissioners to pay the money and bring his Majesty back to London. But the New Model had different views. The King, they thought, would be safer in their keeping than in Parliament's, and on June 3rd, 1647, one Cornet Joyce visited Holmby House in Northamp-

tonshire, and in the name of the army relieved the commissioners of their royal charge. Presbyterian Westminster was furious, but impotent. A powerful minority of the House, led by Cromwell, supported the army's action; was, indeed, by Cromwell's authority, chiefly responsible for it.

The story of the next eighteen months is one of overstrained nerves and passions, tormented by the incurably shifting and shiftless mind of Charles. There is every reason to believe and none to doubt that at this time Cromwell's one desire was to effect a settlement that should compose all differences, avoid further bloodshed, and restore the Monarchy on a constitutional basis that would be acceptable to all parties. But such an end could only be achieved by a spirit of tolerance in the Presbyters, commonsense in the politicians, and candour in the King. None of these conditions was to be found. The Commons—the majority of the Commons, that is—continued to resist the army's demands for liberty of conscience; the Home and War Offices, or whatever they then were, persisted in treating the veterans of Marston Moor and Naseby as naughty rabble; and Charles played out the lamentable farce of supposing that he could hoodwink men of Cromwell's or any other kind of genius. In August

—still 1647—the smouldering embers broke into flame. The army ordered Parliament to suspend eleven of its members. It further announced the conditions upon which it would accept the King's government. These were magnificent in temper. Religious opinion was to be unconditionally free, an exception, for reasons that have already been discussed, being made against Romanism. Presbyterianism was to be free, even Episcopalianism, and if any man believed in neither, he too was to be free. But magnificent as the proposals were, they were as yet beyond the grasp of English policy. Cromwell and Ireton, who were very practical saints, saw this, and counselled their friends not to assume powers of legislation. Hoping to find yet a way of escape from the threatened rupture, they entered into close negotiations with Charles, seeking to persuade him that by accepting a reformed theory of monarchy he could save himself and his people. The main body of the army viewed these approaches with something like savage suspicion. Their captain, they believed, was betraying them. But the betrayal was not his. While Charles was professing favourable and even grateful consideration of the proposals laid before him by Cromwell and Ireton, he was newly in communication with the Scots and constructing a

plot for the fresh invasion of England from the north. Suddenly the generals learnt the truth, and the King was warned. In November the prisoner slipped by his guard at Hampton Court and made good his escape to the Isle of Wight. Terribly disillusioned, Cromwell pledged himself to the last reckoning. But first the Scotch menace had to be met. In the late spring of 1648, Ironsides was at the head of his troops again, and the second Civil War had begun.

XV

THE EXECUTION OF THE KING

XV

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EVEN in this extremity the King thought that his star was rising. What could be more desirable than that the New Model and their late allies the Scots should thus break or be broken? The old infatuation had never so tragically overreached itself. Cromwell moving northwards was veritably a fury of the Lord upon earth. At Preston in August he met the invaders, twenty-one thousand in numbers, swarming down from Scotland under the Duke of Hamilton. He had but nine thousand men in his own command. But he and they were ablaze with an apocalyptic wrath, and in a battle that lasted three days they annihilated the King's last hope. Hamilton fell to utter ruin before a ferocity of attack that has never been excelled in warfare. "Surely, Sir," wrote Oliver in continued obedience to Lenthall as Speaker of the Commons, "this is nothing but the hand of God." And that hand, divine or East Anglian, was now inexorably upon the person of Charles Stuart.

In the meantime the Presbyterian members

had been carrying on negotiations of their own with the King at Carisbrooke. They too had found him incapable of even-handed dealing, but clung to the hope of an accommodation as the only alternative to army rule. Whether they succeeded in the project or failed in reality mattered little, since Cromwell and his men were now returning from Preston and the subsequent northern campaign with an authority that was prepared to abide no question. Charles was removed to other quarters under a strong army guard. This was at the end of November. On December 4th, the Presbyterians of the House in desperation proposed that the King's offers were a sufficient ground of settlement. The debate went on through the night until five o'clock the following morning, when the "Yeas" had it. On the 6th, Thomas Pride, colonel of infantry, well known at Naseby and elsewhere, placed musketeers at all the entrances to Westminster with orders to allow no one to enter whose name was on the list that he carried in his hand as he walked in and out of the Hall and kept up a continuous round of inspection. On the evening of that day Cromwell arrived in town, and on the 7th Pride's Purge was continued. Over a hundred members were excluded; and the Rump Parliament was left to do the army's will.

Cromwell had sworn that if he returned from the field again it should be to judgment. While he had displayed incomparable military genius, and superb personal heroism, he was in his heart nothing of a soldier and all patriot. The first civil war had been to him a very terrible necessity, and he believed, with sufficient reason, that Charles' duplicity and nothing else had been responsible for the second. He felt now, and the whole of independent Puritanism together with a large body of Presbyterians in the army felt with him, that to spare the King would be fatally to imperil everything for which Marston and Naseby and Preston had been fought and won. To us, who can share the passions and dangers of those days only in imagination, to whom the liberties then at stake seem a natural and easy inheritance, the execution of a King appears as an event of tragic horror. But at the time the events necessitating the tragedy were even more shocking. It is difficult for us to hear Cromwell saying, "We will cut off his head with the crown upon it," without wincing as at a cold brutality; but unless we overcome the difficulty, we must miss the meaning of Cromwell and Puritanism altogether. We have to realise that the words were said from the white heat of a soul that had struggled out of the toils of a triple betrayal. And

it was not merely Oliver Cromwell's soul, but England's. The report of the King's trial makes lamentable reading. The terrible judgment, we feel, is being delivered truly by the conscience of a nation, but we feel also an almost anguished desire somehow to modify the finding of the Court. This may be sentimental, but sentimental impulses are always cutting across men's affectation of logic. The great crises of history are wrought in passion, and it is as futile to look for logic in the spectators as it is to look for it in the actors themselves. But even the logic in this scene of tremendous passion cannot finally be disputed. In a play that I wrote on Cromwell, I make his mother say of the King's death, "If this be wrong, all was wrong," and that I think is the inescapable truth. Charles had shown that he could not, or would not, adjust himself to the new conditions of English thought and liberty, and it was plain that he could live only as a constant and dangerous repudiation of those conditions. His death was a solution from which the instinct recoils, but the reason casts about in vain for any other.

The trial began in Westminster Hall on Saturday, January 20th, 1649, John Bradshaw being Lord President of the Court. Charles refused to acknowledge the authority of his judges, and offered no other defence to the

charge of Treason—"subverting the ancient and fundamental laws and liberties of this nation." Cromwell attended the sittings, which lasted until the following Saturday, but took no other part in the proceedings. On the 27th sentence of death was pronounced, on the 29th the Warrant was signed by Bradshaw, Thomas Grey, and, third on the list, Oliver Cromwell, and fifty-six others. The next day the sentence was carried out at Whitehall; Oliver, it is said, witnessing the scene from a window in the palace. To see in this, as detraction had been eager to do, a gross insensibility, is strangely to misapprehend his character.

XVI

CROMWELL IN 1649

XVI

CROMWELL IN 1649

WHILE, however, the death of the King set the seal, and for ever, upon the principles that had sent the Puritans into many desperate fields, its immediate effect was to plunge the parties of England into an even deeper confusion. It was not till more than a generation later that the real lessons of the civil war and of the overthrow of despotic monarchy began to emerge clearly from the political, social, and religious welter that marked the Commonwealth and the reigns of the later Stuarts. Never has the din of sects and factions risen in shriller confusion than it did in the 'fifties of seventeenth-century Britain, and of those old and bitter quarrels it is chiefly the confusion that has survived. Our loss is trifling. In the twenty years between 1629 and 1649 the character of our country made one of those manifestations that are a story for ever. In those years the objects for which men strove were defined with a black-and-white precision. But once that clean-cut issue had been decided, the disputants fell into an infinite vari-

ety of vain and petty brawls. Up to the date of the King's execution the contest had been between heroes; men of the Shakespearean stature, whether for good or evil intent. But with the bleak incisiveness of that snowy January morning outside Whitehall, it fell into a squabble between fishwives. Our interest is only with the emphasis that the chaos of settlement gave to the nature of the man who had made the settlement possible.

It is, perhaps, a rash conclusion, but we believe that Cromwell in his secret reflections knew that in 1649 his real work had been accomplished. It would, he must have believed, take more years than he would see to bring the nation to serene enjoyment of the privileges for which he had fought. He may even have suspected that his desires would finally be realised in conditions quite alien to those of his present moulding. On the death of the King, monarchy was abolished by Parliament in terms that were intended to establish the new order in permanence, but it is not unlikely that even then Cromwell saw the shadow of the restoration as he certainly saw it before his death less than ten years later. One thing, however, was sure in the midst of these or other doubts; a word had been said that must sooner or later set the people of England firmly in control of popular rights

against any tyranny. How soon or how late could not at the moment be told, but the consummation was from that moment inevitable, and Cromwell knew it. In the meantime, he had little leisure for speculation. For the rest of his life he was engaged in preserving such unity as he could in a great national party that after a supreme effort had fallen exhausted into a fever of internal discord. In doing this he displayed infirmities to which he freely confessed. When he spoke of his burden as too great to be borne and of himself as a poor worm, the words were no lip-service to an occasion, but the cries of a passionate and suffering spirit deeply toiled in circumstance.

History down to our own time is rich in examples of the spectacle. A man leads his people up to and through a crisis with superb vision and heroism, and when the achievement comes later to be organised on the ebb of the consuming impulse he shows that his greatness is heir to the common frailties of mankind. It was so with Cromwell. Up to 1649 there is little in his career that does not wholly compel our admiration. He was now fifty years of age. He had throughout his manhood been steadfast in mind and speech to the most liberal form of Puritan doctrine; he had given his cause authority by fearless example and by military

genius of a unique character; and he had been chiefly responsible for the vindication of English freedom in a victory that, however ruthless it may have been, was nobly disinterested. At this point he stands before us, the patriot without blemish; the subtlest and most intelligent patriot, perhaps, by whom the action of English history has been dignified. The nine years that he had yet to live brought him to yet greater world eminence, but they belonged essentially to an occasion of diminished splendour, and they betrayed him into lapses that we recognise without presuming to blame. His immense capacity for statesmanship was, indeed, fully tried only in these later years, and to the end he revealed an inexhaustible power and invention as a leader of men. The successes of his government at home and abroad were largely his personal successes, and they afforded constant proof that he was immeasurably the ablest administrator in the country at the time. Nor were the native qualities of his heart ever seriously obscured. Vexed in soul as he often was, he continued always to care above all for the well-being of England, which for him meant the individual liberty and enlightenment of the English people. But once the meridian of effort had been passed, and inspiration had to be tested in endless details of policy and interest, the trouble

was that even he could not always see how that well-being was to be effected. And sometimes he chose questionable means for his purpose. Once or twice he allowed his perplexity to betray him into actions that may be explained but which even affection does not seek to excuse.

The Puritan Revolution was an event infinitely valuable to the life of all coming generations in England; but also it was an act of violence, and it was upon this violence that Cromwell's government of England was founded. Here was a condition for which the price had inevitably to be paid. Cromwell and his men stood for right as clearly as any party has ever stood in this country, but they held power without legal sanction, and were in consequence subject to a formal insecurity that no moral justification could remove. They might, and indeed did, make their own legal sanction, but it was bound to be hotly disputed at every step, and utterly denied by a large body of opinion. The execution of Charles may have been necessary and just, but no ingenuity could make it lawful. It was, in fact, contrived by a minority assembly at the orders of a dominant army. That army was, we know, composed of the best that England then could very proudly boast, but it literally took the law into its own hands, with results that were a daily menace to the Common-

wealth and Oliver's Protectorate. Profoundly thankful as we may be that he was so, we cannot deny that Cromwell was the usurper that he was so bitterly styled. And the usurper, however sure his claims may be by equity and reason and the common good, has discarded peace of mind for ever. Inescapably he is drawn into the way of despotism, and step by step, in his dealings with Parliament, with the army, and with national policy, Cromwell became as despotic as the monarchy that he had destroyed. Between the two despotisms there was a vital difference. Charles's despotism was leading the nation into captivity, Cromwell's was the prelude to the deliverance for which he had fought but for which he could not yet discover the practical formula. But despotism, no matter how benevolent it may be, is inseparable from excesses, and of such excesses Cromwell's rule cannot be absolved. We may, however, ask that they should be kept duly in perspective. Few despots of Oliver's power and circumstance have so little need to ask the indulgence of history.

XVII

IRELAND

XVII

IRELAND

WITHIN three weeks of the King's death the government passed into the hands of a Council of State, of which Cromwell was a member and the first President. There was, however, urgent business to be dealt with outside the council chamber, and almost at once Oliver was back with the army, leaving the Presidency to Bradshaw. Two matters of high importance claimed his attention.

Foremost of these was a Royalist movement in Ireland. But before this could be arrested, it was necessary to see that the discipline and temper of the army had not fallen out of repair during the months of inactivity. Disorder of a very formidable kind was immediately apparent. Numbers of men who had fought with pure zeal for Puritanism fondly believed that with the new government would be inaugurated their veritable kingdom of heaven on earth. They had risked all for freedom, and now freedom, absolute and elysian, should surely be their reward. This had been a war for the establish-

ment of the perfect state, with every man unhindered in the enjoyment of equal rights. The war had been won; and yet here were army leaders still enforcing discipline and soldier-statesmen suggesting that there was a long and rough road to travel yet. Brave men, but refusing to realise that the millennium was no more within their grasp than the moon. The Levellers preached to their comrades in the ranks that nothing now stood between them and Utopia but the self-esteem of a few jacks-in-office. In short, they were openly inciting to mutiny, and Cromwell found himself for the first time in the tragically false position that is so often the fate of practical evangelists. He, the heart and right arm of liberty's cause in England, was now called upon to correct men whose demand was for nothing but freedom and yet more freedom. The claimants were not loosely aiming at mere license; they sincerely believed that the material and spiritual worlds could there and then be parcelled out in terms of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In demonstration of their theories they annexed certain lands at Cobham in Surrey, started community agriculture, proposed to extend their holding by pulling down the palings of a neighbouring park and appropriating the enclosures, and promised anyone who would join them the current equivalent of

three acres and a cow. Cromwell may very well have sympathised with their ambitions. But he was in command of an army that was under orders for duty across the Irish Channel, and it was in this army that the Levellers were most active. At such a moment there was no room in his nature for philosophic doubt. Either he must act strongly or resign from public office. Warnings and entreaties were of no avail. The levelling ringleaders persisted in their propaganda, and suddenly the unpractical saints found themselves sharply in conflict with the saint who was disconcertingly practical. A few swift descents on the scenes of disaffection were followed by the processes of court-martial, and firing-parties did their lamentable work in the full gaze of London traffic at St. Paul's and in the seclusion of a country churchyard at Burford in Oxfordshire. As the executed body of a young trooper named Lockyer, who at the age of twenty-three had seen seven years of service in the Puritan army, was carried away from St. Paul's for burial, a great crowd followed the coffin through the London streets, deeply shaken with emotion but in an orderly silence broken only by the sound of "six trumpets sounding a soldier's knell." But Cromwell needed no such spectacle to convince him how dreadful the occasion was. Perceiving that something must be

done, he believed also that the only merciful way was to do it decisively. The pretensions of the Levellers as he saw them were in no sense ignoble; but as things were they meant anarchy in the State and ruin to the country. There was nothing for it but to crush them, and for this the two relentless strokes of St. Paul's and Burford sufficed. Under those terrible examples, Cromwell persuaded the malcontents to mend their ways; and he persuaded them with an eloquence that rose above intimidation. They could face the rifles of a firing-squad without flinching, but when old Ironsides of Marston and Naseby stood before them pleading in person, they could not withstand the passion of that unthreatening appeal. The smoking barrels were indeed an earnest of his inflexible will, but that alone could not have won them. It was when they realised that the man who had never failed them in battle was still of an uncorruptible spirit that they succumbed. Cromwell's army was whole again. But he had been driven to his first act of despotism; for it was something more than a military insurrection that he had suppressed.

Cromwell's Irish campaign is the dark shadow upon his fame; with what justice we shall enquire. History has a two-fold function: to collect facts, and to interpret them. The his-

torian who confines himself to the accurate assembling of data is our creditor even though he resolutely refrains from offering any observations upon the material that he arranges. He is readily dubbed dryasdust by writers who are willing enough to borrow from his archives, perhaps without acknowledgment, but he is in reality often an honour to scholarship and greatly facilitates our understanding of mankind. But the historian who chooses rather to attempt the translation of ascertained facts into credible figures of humanity has a definite responsibility, which too often he ignores. If beyond recording an event he seeks to invest it with motive and character, it is his duty to do so in terms that do not violate a common knowledge of human nature. In my book about Charles II, I suggested that the usual interpretation of his treatment of Montrose was not plausible in the light of psychology or common sense. Critics who in their moral prejudice are prepared to believe any ill of Charles, accept without question the view that he abandoned a loyal gallant servant in a mood of craven and cynical treachery. I showed that, having due regard for the circumstances and Charles's character in all its aspects, this was a view that made no sense. My explanation of the affair may or may not have been the true one, but at least it squared the actors in the drama

with some possible code of conduct based on experience of men and their ways. And so with Cromwell in Ireland. He did things there the horror of which has never been forgotten. It is not our business to excuse or palliate them. But it is our business to see as exactly as we can how and why he came to do them, and not to accept the fulminations inspired by a general prejudice against a Cromwell in effigy bearing no resemblance to the original. When we hear that drunk with power and pride of place Oliver abandoned himself in Ireland to a frenzy of hideous brutality, deranged at last in an unbridled lust for destruction, we know that animosity has lost control of itself. And yet, if we refuse this explanation, we have to find another. For Cromwell's severities in Ireland were, and are, staggering, and some explanation is needed. Our only clue to the right one must, as always, be a consideration of his character in relation to the known circumstances.

We have seen the temper in which Cromwell approached his northern campaign when he learnt that Charles was keeping faith at no step in the negotiations between them. He had fought the second civil war with an iron determination to make any further appeal to the sword impossible, and he had carried the task through implacably to the scaffold at Whitehall.

There remained before him the further and infinitely difficult task of reconstruction. To that he was now preparing to devote all his energies, addressing himself to problems that might have daunted any man, and with one sole assurance to support him, that the final trial by battle had been made. And at that moment news came from Ireland that a dozen contending factions had been composed by the unwearying policy of the Marquis of Ormond into a new and formidable Royalist army. Catholics, Episcopalians, covenanting Presbyterians, refugee Cavaliers, Parliament troops quartered in Ireland but with no very strong affections for Parliament in these later days and susceptible to the prestige of Ormond, stragglers from the defeated Scots army, and Protestant colonists who distrusted the upstart Commonwealth even more than they did their Catholic neighbours, all these suddenly became reconciled at Ormond's bidding into a compact and very formidable front. Very soon the whole island except Dublin and Derry was in their hands, the young Charles in exile was debating whether he should join the Ormondites in Ireland or the Covenanters in Scotland, and extensive preparations were forward for a further challenge at arms in the King's name.

The effect of this intelligence on Cromwell

can readily be imagined. Always a resolute fighter, his resolution was now stung to fury, and he turned upon Ireland in avenging wrath. On March 15th, 1649, he was made Commander of the Irish Forces and Lord Lieutenant; on the same day Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State. We get glimpses of Oliver's domestic concerns while he is preparing for Ireland. He marries his son Richard, the future Protector, to Dorothy Mayor, conducting a scrupulous correspondence with "my very loving brother Richard Mayor, Esquire, at Hursley" about the marriage settlement, complaining that his loving brother is being rather close: "I received your Paper . . . I desire your leave to return my dissatisfaction therewith . . . I have two young Daughters to bestow, if God give them life and opportunity. According to your offer, I have nothing for them; nothing at all in hand." An amicable agreement was made, however, and towards the end of July he writes from Bristol to Hursley that he is "very glad to hear that our children have so good leisure to make a journey to eat cherries," adding that he is expecting his wife at Bristol and that she will doubtless call on them by the way. In August he was at Milford Haven, and on the 13th sailed for Ireland, arriving at Dublin two days later.

He was in the country nine months, and when he left in May 1650, his son-in-law Ireton, who succeeded him in command, had only isolated risings in remote parts of the west to deal with, Ormond's main forces having been destroyed. The succession of events in this military campaign need not be given here, adding as for the most part they do nothing to our knowledge of Cromwell. After October 1649, indeed, the campaign thinned out into a war of attrition, disease in Cromwell's ranks being neutralised by desertion from Ormond's, until Cromwell's superior discipline and generalship wore down the last opposition. But before that date Drogheda and Wexford had been stormed, and it is by Drogheda and Wexford that Cromwell's conduct in Ireland has been measured. The facts may be stated briefly.

On his arrival at Dublin Cromwell at once issued a proclamation imposing the strictest restraint on his troops in their dealings with the civil population, defining very exactly the offences for which they would be answerable. As though already conscious of the extreme rigours to which he was shortly to put the interpretation of martial law, he spared no pains at the outset to let it be known precisely what that law forbade. This was on August 24th, 1649. A week later, "after some refreshment taken for

our weather-beaten men and horses," he was at Drogheda (Tredah in those times) some thirty miles north of Dublin. It was a stronghold of great strategic importance, and was moreover the headquarters of Ormond's principal strength. Its reduction was a capital necessity to Cromwell's designs, and as his army lay before it on September 2nd his determination burnt in a steady incandescence. He took a week to "frame his batteries," and on the 9th they began to play. Simultaneously, he sent a summons to the Governor requiring him to "deliver the Town to the use of the Parliament of England," with an offer of safe conduct to the garrison. No satisfaction being returned, the bombardment proceeded. On the 10th the storm was made, and was repulsed with heavy loss. This was not to be endured. Rallying his men, Cromwell, Lieutenant General, Lord-lieutenant, Commander-in-chief, and what not besides, placed himself at their head and in person led a second assault. This time the breach was entered, and as defence by defence was broken the defendants were slain without quarter. Nearly three thousand of them perished. There is no doubt that in the chaos of that slaughter a number of civilians, and even women and children, were slaughtered, but there is no reliable evidence to show that this was with

Cromwell's sanction or by any deliberation. The ethics of civilian immunity in warfare, so drastically tested in our own time, were in any case an inconsiderable element in the sack of Drogheda. It is enough that the garrison was annihilated. The town was in Cromwell's hands, and it would not have been the less so had he shown mercy. He showed none. It does not make pretty reading, but we have yet to learn from any page of history that the invasion of a country has ever been a pretty business. Mildness was no part of Cromwell's soldiering, and he was convinced that never could mildness be more misguided than now. Ireland was to know that resistance meant ruin, and it was the fate of Drogheda to bear the first tragic witness to the inexorable condition. The garrisons of Dundalk and Trim asked for no further example, and laid down their arms forthwith. Three weeks later Cromwell was before Wexford, more than a hundred miles south of Drogheda. On October 3rd the summons to deliver the town "to the use of the State of England" was made. The Governor asked for time in which to consult with his officers and the Mayor, and for a cessation of hostilities in the meantime. To which Oliver replied, "Sir, I am contented to expect your resolution by twelve of the clock to-morrow morning. Because our tents are not so good a cover-

ing as your houses, and for other reasons, I cannot agree to a cessation. I rest, Your servant, Oliver Cromwell." The next day the Governor proposed a conference, and was told that he was being asked not to negotiate but surrender, but that if he had anything to say he could send his messengers to Cromwell within an hour. A further extension of time was granted, and on the 5th the Governor announced that his conditions were drawn up. Cromwell sent a safe-conduct for four envoys. At that moment a relieving force obtained entry to the town, the Governor was encouraged to stiffen his argument, and told Cromwell he must wait a little longer. Cromwell instantly withdrew the safe-conduct, and prepared to assault the castle. On the 11th the batteries opened, and after a hundred shots had been fired "the Governor's Stomach came down" and he asked for a renewal of the safe-conduct, which was given. Two field-officers, an alderman, and the Captain of the Castle, brought out the specified propositions, "which," says Cromwell in writing to the Speaker of the Commons, "for their abominableness, manifesting also the impudency of these men, I thought fit to present to your view." The conditions, which need not be enumerated here, amounted to a confirmation of the civic rights of the town to the existing corporation, and leave for such

citizens as chose to depart from the town with their property; full acknowledgment of the Roman establishment in the town and its franchises; and permission for the entire garrison with its "artillery, ordnance, ammunition, arms, goods of all sorts, horses, moneys and what else belongs to them" to march under flying colours with a convoy provided by Cromwell to escort them to a destination of their own choosing in Ormond's country. Cromwell might well see in this an "impudency" seldom equalled. His answer was brief, but still admirable in its moderation. "I have had the patience to peruse your Propositions; to which I might have returned an Answer with some disdain. But, to be short —I shall give the Soldiers and Non-Commissioned Officers quarter for life, and leave to go to their several habitations, with their wearing clothes; they engaging themselves to live quietly there, and to take up arms no more against the Parliament of England. And the Commissioned Officers quarter for their lives, but to render themselves Prisoners. And as for the Inhabitants, I shall engage myself that no violence shall be offered to their goods, and that I shall protect the Town from plunder." The letter was not delivered; while Cromwell was writing it, the battery fire was proceeding, and an act of betrayal in the town gave the besiegers

sudden entry. The scene that followed was none of Cromwell's ordering; but he did not disown it. The extremity was by a few hours out of his reckoning, but it was one to which he was prepared to go. Again there is no evidence of violence done outside the severest imposition of military law, apart from the inevitable excesses of individual soldiers; and again the destruction of the garrison was complete.

As to the effect that Drogheda and Wexford had on the future of the Irish campaign each student of history must form his own conclusions. Opinions vary between far extremes. *The Cambridge Modern History* (Professor Dunlop) considers that the violence was useless, "because after the first terror had passed away it did not serve to weaken the resistance of a single garrison." At the other extreme there is Carlyle's "that it did 'save much effusion of blood' (Cromwell's own words) we and all spectators can very readily testify . . . In fact, it cut through the heart of the Irish War . . . there was no other storm or slaughter needed in that Country." Carlyle goes too far, but he is, we think, a good deal nearer the truth than the more recent historian. Stubborn resistance was still offered here and there, but as we read the records of this and of many bloodless capitulations, we are persuaded that it would have been far

more stubborn and far more general if Cromwell had mitigated his first blows. In May 1650, he left Ireland with the famous "Cromwellian Settlement" already well in view. The conditions of the settlement were to be a storm-centre of bitterness and contention for nearly three centuries; but without them it is by no means unlikely that Great Britain would long since have become a third rate power. The moralities of the matter may be left to anyone who feels competent to pronounce on them; but that is the fact. On reaching London Cromwell was conducted in triumph through the streets by Parliament, the home army, civic lords and throngs of citizens. Someone exclaimed on the size of the multitude assembled to meet him, and Oliver replied that a much greater would come out any day to see him hanged.

XVIII

DUNBAR AND WORCESTER

XVIII

DUNBAR AND WORCESTER

THE Scotch War, arising out of circumstances that necessitated Cromwell's return from Ireland, throws no new light on his character, but touches his military character with its last strong note of genius. The Scotch Covenanters, tired of waiting on the English Parliament for favours that never advanced beyond polite assurances, opened negotiations with the pathetic little court of Charles to be the Second that was dodging about the Continent in search of any alms or hospitality that it could come by. After long hesitation as to whether he should ally himself to the Montrose Royalists or the Covenanting Presbyters, and after vain efforts by Hyde and others to unite those irreconcilables in one cause, Charles at the age of twenty landed in Scotland under the equally distasteful auspices of Argyll's low cunning and Kirk pedantry. He had already been preached into taking the Covenant, and now his new mentors did their daily best to preach him out of his five wits. And while they preached Cromwell was crossing the

border with his Ironsides, in the field again to meet yet another challenge against the England of his dreams. On the way he writes to Richard Mayor, "I should be glad to hear how the little Brat doth. I could chide both Father and Mother for their neglects of me: I knew my son is idle, but I had better thoughts of Doll. I doubt now her husband hath spoiled her; pray tell her so from me . . . I hope you will discharge my duty and your love; you see how I am employed. I need pity. I know what I feel. Great place and business in the world is not worth looking after . . . I have not sought these things." On September 3rd, a year and a day after his fateful appearance before Drogheda, he engaged the army of the Covenant at Dunbar. He had eleven thousand men, very precariously situated; the Scots had twenty-two thousand, deployed on chosen ground, and with ample lines of communication, Cromwell's being cut off. At six o'clock in the morning, hoping to snatch an advantage by not waiting to be attacked, Oliver moved his whole force into action, his word for the day being "The Lord of Hosts." Within an hour the Puritan arms had achieved one of the most astounding victories known to the chronicles of war. The Scotch army became a total rout, scattered in a pursuit of eight miles. Three thousand were killed, and ten thousand

prisoners were taken, together with the entire baggage and artillery. And then, in Cromwell's despatch to the Speaker, comes the amazing passage, "I do not believe we have lost twenty men." It was a long road now that had been covered from the Eastern Association. The Ironsides campaigns were soon to be at an end.

Through the winter of 1650-51 Cromwell spent his time and his eloquence attempting to convince the Scots who had fought by his side at Marston Moor that their allegiance with the house of Stuart was a monstrous folly. But, speaking in the name of England, he would have none of their Covenant, and short of that they would listen to no proposals. The establishment of a Presbyterian Church in the Kingdom of Great Britain was too rich a prize to be lost, if it could in any way be secured. The only hope still seemed to be in the restoration of Charles to the throne, and so in spite of Dunbar the Scots laboured with him in sermons and promises. On New Year's day, 1651, they crowned him King at Scone, a week after Edinburgh Castle had yielded to Oliver's persuasions—very pacific but very determined, with batteries waiting to supplement the argument—and placed itself in his hands. There Cromwell waits some four months, still arguing and still hoping; troubled not a little by the exploits of

Moss-troopers, a kind of wilder Scotch equivalent to the English Clubmen; asking the Army Committee in London that "you will spare the having my Effigies" on the medal that is to be struck in honour of Dunbar; accepting the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford, after explaining his many disqualifications for that high honour, and marking the occasion by a request that a doctor who had done well by his troops in Ireland should be given a Degree; desiring the Commons to extend all friendly consideration to the project for founding a college at Durham, "as that which, by the blessing of God, may much conduce to the promoting of learning and piety in those poor rude and ignorant parts"; lying at one time in a "fit of sickness" of which he thought to have died; and exchanging letters of lovely domestic tenderness with his wife—"I have not much to write: yet indeed I love to write to my Dear, who is very much in my heart." And Richard, who now at the age of twenty-four, might in these busy times have found, we should have supposed, some worthy employment, "hath," it seems, "exceeded his allowance, and is in debt." If anyone should doubt the gentleness that lay in the depths of our great Puritan's heart, let him consider these words of paternal fondness; they are written to Richard Mayor: "I desire it to be understood

that I grudge him not laudable recreations, nor an honourable carriage of himself in them . . . Truly I can find in my heart to allow him not only a sufficiency but more, for his good . . . Truly I love him, he is dear to me; so is his wife; and for their sakes so I thus write. They shall not want comfort nor encouragement from me, so far as I may afford it." And then, with visions of Marston and Naseby and Drogheda and Dunbar before him, "But indeed I cannot think I do well to feed a voluptuous humour in my Son, if he should make pleasures the business of his life, in a time when some precious Saints are bleeding, and breathing out their last, for the safety of the rest." England is the nobler for that.

In July 1651 the Scotch army, re-organised and nominally commanded by Charles, was again broken by Cromwell, this time at Inverkeithing, and the young prince with such salvage as he could collect resolved on the last desperate expedient of marching into England in the hope that his presence would rally the Royalists there to some effective strength. Cromwell, leaving Monk to do what remained to be done in Scotland, followed at high speed, and on the first anniversary of Dunbar the Ironsides fought their last battle, in the streets of Worcester. The result was decisive, and now

the Kirk and Royalism knew that it was decisive. Charles escaped to France. And to "the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England" Cromwell wrote, "It is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy." We may recall his words to Hampden after Edgehill, now nearly ten years ago. Never, perhaps, has such a boast as they implied been so magnificently justified. He had been through five campaigns with an army of his own making, had fought innumerable skirmishes and at last six capital actions, had never once been put to terms, and now his soldiering was done.

XIX

LORD PROTECTOR

XIX

LORD PROTECTOR

THE ideals for which Cromwell and his men had for nine years been more or less continuously in the field have, I hope, been made sufficiently clear. Order in the State under regularised parliamentary control, freedom of the subject within the law, and liberty of conscience, were the main issues. They had been now trebly vindicated by the appeal to arms, and Cromwell left his troops for the last time to see that they should be realised in the administration of peace. The difficulty of his task has already been indicated. It had not diminished during his absence in Ireland and Scotland. The Rump of the Long Parliament had slowly subsided into a torpor in which it now drowsed supinely through a time-table of formalities. It was perfectly plain to any candid observer that the government of the country was in fact no longer conducted from Westminster at all, but from the headquarters of Cromwell's army. Oliver himself could very truly protest that he did not desire this—"I have not sought these things."

He was far too clear-headed and clear-souled a patriot to trifle in his mind for a moment with the situation. So long as there were battles still to be won, Parliament could do little but watch and wait, but now that the last battle was over Cromwell knew well enough that there could be no hope of a settlement in the country until the real authority had passed back again from the army to the Commons.

The first thing to be done was to replace the quite unrepresentative and now discarded Rump by a full and nationally elected Parliament. For nearly two years after Worcester Cromwell persevered in debate to this end. He was already much worn in body and spirit. "My Lord," said a friend in Scotland, "is not sensible that he is grown an old man." But the iron will did not allow his energies to falter. The long sessions of 1651-1653 added weariness to weariness. The sitting members of the Rump had no mind to do anything, but they had less mind to depart in peace. Their chief pretext for remaining where they were was a Dutch War. Holland had never taken kindly to the new Commonwealth of England; had indeed refused it any diplomatic respect. It was the army again that took the matter in hand, this time at sea under Blake, but the members at Westminster argued with some plausibility that

they must not be disturbed in their business of securing necessary supplies. In the meantime the progress towards reconstruction was precisely nil. Complaints of every kind poured in from men in all ranks of life with legitimate grievances. They were obligingly placed on the file for reference. Veterans of Marston Moor and Naseby, long versed now in the dual responsibility of praising God and keeping their powder dry, asked with growing impatience if anyone could tell them what they had been fighting for. Cromwell could, but his daily care was not to answer the question himself but to make Parliament answer it. And the Rump slept on, rousing itself at intervals to expound theories of new possible forms of government. On the whole the feeling was "that a Settlement with somewhat of Monarchical power in it would be very effectual." These were Cromwell's words; and rumour, confidently misinformed as usual, whispered that he aimed at making himself King. He did not even trouble to contradict the grossness, but continued in his efforts to galvanise the Rump into enough life to replace itself by a responsible assembly. His public and private affections were darkened at the time by the loss of Ireton, who died of a fever in Ireland at the end of 1651. Ireton was succeeded by Charles Fleetwood, one of Crom-

well's generals, who later also became his son-in-law, marrying Ireton's widow, Bridget.

Slowly the Rump elaborated a device whereby it should add to its numbers and make itself into a representative assembly without the hazardous necessity of going to the country. It was speedily clear that the army would have no such nonsense. If any of the Westminster sleepers wanted to keep his bench, he must get himself re-elected. The sleepers began to take serious notice at last. They would not get re-elected. They would stay together, if they pleased, until death did them part; and, further, they would reserve to themselves the right of rejecting, on grounds of public interest, any newly elected member of whom they did not approve. This went on until April 1653, when a Bill embodying these provisions was actually before the House, and likely to be passed. Cromwell's patience was exhausted, and his sense of national danger at length startled into action. After a conference with the army officers, his decision was made. On April 20th, while the Bill was being debated, "the Lord General Cromwell came into the House, clad in plain black clothes and grey worsted stockings, and sat down, as he was wont to do, in an ordinary place." The question was put, "that this Bill do now pass," whereupon Oliver "rose

up, put off his hat, and spake." Never have honourable members been so shocked to hear the truth about themselves. Very wide awake now, one of them expressed deep pain that language so unusual should be heard in those walls, and from an honourable member, too, himself so much respected. A sharp echo as from Ely Cathedral cut him short as Cromwell walked on to the floor of the House exclaiming, "Come, come! We have had enough of this. I will put an end to your prating." An outer door opened, to admit a body of armed musketeers, who stood at attention while Oliver proceeded. "You call yourselves a Parliament —You are no Parliament—I say you are no Parliament . . . Corrupt unjust persons . . . Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God—go!" Seizing the mace and crying out "What shall we do with this bauble?" he handed it to a musketeer, while Speaker Lenthall was led from his chair and out of the House, and the Long Parliament after twelve years of many and memorable glories had slumbered itself into an ignominious end.

On June 6th, Cromwell issued a summons to a hundred and forty men nominated by himself and the Council of Officers, calling them to London on immediate business of State. A fur-

ther act of despotism, but in its choice of men very liberal and discriminating. The Little Parliament, otherwise designated also after one of its members, Mr. Praisegod Barebones, was scrupulously representative of the best elements in national Puritanism both in and out of the army. It met in the Council-chamber at Whitehall, and on July 4th Cromwell opened its proceedings with a long speech reviewing the history of the past twenty years, defining the purposes that had inspired the revolution, tracing the events of the war, and reciting the misdemeanours of the recently expelled Rump. The enemies of truth had been vanquished in the field; it was now for them in the name of truth to set up a just Government in peace. A new Executive Council of State, they were informed, had been chosen, "eight or nine of them being Members of the House that late was." This Council was to sit only at the bidding of his hearers. And so they parted on the first day: "I say, you are called with an high calling. And why should we be afraid to say or think, that this may be the door to usher in the things that God has promised?"

But it was not to be. The Little Parliament did not slumber; it attended diligently to business, and did much useful work in clearing out the pigeon-holes of some dust and rubbish. But

the praisegods began to get the upper hand, and wanted to introduce inquisitorial practices in the Church not at all in keeping with the new independent doctrines. Also some members proposed to abolish the Court of Chancery, as being an intolerable nuisance to everyone but the lawyers, who promptly became voluble and pulled a great number of wires. In less than six months, a minority of the House by a snap vote declared that this Parliament was of no further use to the State, and resigned its powers to Cromwell as president of the Council. What was really happening was that the Puritan revolution had now passed into its last and least impressive phase. At first there had been the sublimely mysterious stirring of popular conscience seeking to enfranchise itself. Then had come such a compact between the Bible and the sword as can be found nowhere else in history, a compact made possible only by the unique disposition of the Puritan character. And now the heroic days were dwindling into the shabby scuffles of politics. The liberal heart and mind of England could form no party that was not teased at every turn by craft and envy from without, and by irresolution within. The vision was unabated with the power in one man alone, and Cromwell was now to accept a responsibility under which he would have reason

enough to cry out in wearier moods that the burden was too great to be borne. The Little Parliament disbanded on December 2nd, 1653. On the 12th the Council of State met to consider what was to be done, and on the 16th Oliver Cromwell was publicly proclaimed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland. At the installation in Westminster Hall, he wore "a rich but plain suit; black velvet, with cloak of the same; about his hat a broad band of gold."

XX

FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT

XX

FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT

In the first charter of the Protectorate, it was ordained that a full and free Parliament should be summoned on the third of September following, the date being fixed in commemoration of Dunbar and Worcester. Until it sat Cromwell was given powers to enact such laws as he thought necessary for the government of the country. He was thus for eight months a more absolute ruler than ever Charles I had aspired to be. He did not abuse his privileges, but he was not long in learning that the position of an elected head of the State in England could never be an enviable one; that it could not, indeed, for long be a tenable one. From the beginning plots were to be found under any and every Royalist, Leveller, or Anabaptist bush. Many of them aimed directly at the life of the Protector. Of these Oliver took little or no notice, proceeding in extreme cases as far as a conviction, and then telling the conspirators to be off and find some better occupation, until at last examples had to be made in self-defence.

Business of first importance was Church government. In this he was flatly for toleration, but anarchy was another matter. In the worship of God, men and their ministers might enjoy almost any latitude, but sedition, atheism, political jobbery and Royalist propaganda promoted under the cover of such worship had to be discountenanced. He appointed a Commission of laymen and divines, representative of many sects in its constitution, whom anyone holding a living or collecting tithes had to satisfy as to his *bona fides*. Even Oliver's adversaries were compelled to admit that his Church Ordinance was a rational one, that his commissioners were well chosen, and that they really did purge the ministry of much rottenness. Many other profitable ordinances also he issued in those eight months, most of them directed towards an efficient civil service. Imperial and foreign policy shared his attention with the smallest routine of domestic affairs. European ambassadors began to report that the upstart Commonwealth was being piloted by a man of notable parts and, apparently, of devilish tough integrity. And as the traffic of London was becoming dangerously congested, so that a pedestrian could hardly cross the Strand in safety, the Lord Protector of, etc., ordained that not more than two hundred hackney coaches should be allowed on

the streets within a six mile radius of Charing Cross.

During this time Oliver left his lodgings in the Cockpit, Westminster, and moved into official quarters at Whitehall. At week-ends, business permitting, he went down to Hampden Court with his family, leaving his mother, now well over ninety years of age, to the tenderest care he could find until his return. September the third this year—1654—fell on a Sunday, but the new Parliament met nevertheless on that day; four hundred English members, thirty Scotch, and thirty Irish.

In his first speech to his first Parliament (the "Little" not being properly a Parliament at all) Cromwell told them that he would not dwell on the events of late years, "though they are things which I hope will never be forgotten, because written in better books than those of paper; written, I am persuaded, in the heart of every good man." He reminded them of their proper charge, "to wit, healing and settling," with a hint to let bygones be bygones. As to "Civils," as he called temporal matters, he would have his hearers take especial heed of the Levellers, whose hope to merge noblemen, gentlemen and yeomen into one class would, he feared, make for nothing but confusion if encouraged. As to "Spirituals" the case was more

complicated. Anti-Christ, seen by Cromwell in the semblance of Rome and of Laud the shadow of Rome, was by this time pretty well under restraint, but there was a body very active among them that would, unless vigilance were exercised, bring comfort yet to Anti-Christ and all his errors. The Fifth Monarchy men, whose gospel was the reign on earth of Christ and His saints, aimed at the abolition of any other reign whatsoever. The Magistracy, they declared, had no jurisdiction in matters of conscience. Themselves for the most part good Christians, if others favoured Anti-Christ they must be allowed to do so unmolested unless and until the Spirit intervened. Further, the ordination of ministers in any kind was heathenish, as setting one man over another. The old tyranny of forbidding any man to preach unless he was ordained, no matter how sure his "testimony from Christ," said Cromwell, was bad, but this new tyranny of excluding a man merely because he was ordained, was worse. "Liberty of Conscience, and Liberty of the Subject," the watchwords of Fifth Monarchism, were, he allowed, "two as glorious things to be contended for as any that God hath given us," and then, once again confronting transcendentalism with the clear-cut logic of the Practical Saint, he added that "both these had been abused for the

patronising of villainies." In short, these Fifth Monarchy men were very much challenging the authority of himself the Chief Magistrate, and he must therefore tell them that he was unwilling to betray a trust that, while he had not sought it, he had accepted from the country with a heavy sense of responsibility. Since his elevation eight months ago, Bills had been prepared for making the Laws "plain and short, and less chargeable to the People," and would shortly be laid before the House: corrupt and incompetent persons had been dismissed from the judicature; also from the Church ministry; peace on honourable terms had been concluded with Portugal, Holland, Denmark, and a treaty arranged with France. So that on the whole he could with some confidence submit to them a record of work which had prepared the way for that "healing and settling" to which they were now called. That his magistracy had been instrumental in this calling of a free Parliament was itself his chiefest satisfaction. He now commended them to the election of their Speaker, assuring them that he was their "fellow servant." But it was, by their leave, necessary at this outset to remind Fifth Monarchy men and all other ingenuous theorists that these were still times of grave public peril, and as they could rest assured that he would not desert

his post, so he was not going to be driven from it. Having concluded, the Protector returned by barge to Whitehall.

The speech was firm but carefully unprovocative, and it seemed to be well received. But at once it was plain that its lesson had not been taken to heart. The House, instead of getting on with healing and settling, fell at once to debating whether the government of the country ought really to be by Parliament and a single person after all. That question, Cromwell had told them, had already been answered in the affirmative, but they chose to disregard the warning. Cromwell did nothing for a week, hoping that they would come to their senses, which they did not. On September 12th, the members found the Parliament doors closed under an armed guard, and were told that they were to meet the Lord Protector in the Painted Chamber. There, in a speech as conciliatory in tone as it was passionate in mood, Cromwell elaborated his argument. "I was a gentleman by birth; living neither in considerable height, nor yet in obscurity." Having been called to serve the nation as best he could, first as a simple member of the Commons and then in the wars, he had returned to London after Worcester hoping to find Parliament well disposed to a peaceful settlement of the people. He had

found instead nothing but wrangling and indolence. "I say to you, I hoped to have had leave to retire to a private life. I begged to be dismissed from my charge; I begged it again and again." He had been refused, and he had implored Parliament to have done with their quarrels and govern; they had not listened, and he had driven them out, as his present hearers well knew, and had been responsible for calling that "Little" nominated Parliament which, indeed, had failed of expectations. And then, "The Gentlemen [a Council of Officers and Other Persons of Interest in the Nation] that undertook to frame this Government did consult divers ways . . . and that I was not privy to their councils they know. . . . They told me that except I would undertake the government they thought things would hardly come to a compromise or settlement, but blood and confusion would break in upon us. I refused it again and again, not complimentingly, as they know and as God knows. I confess, after many arguments . . . I did accept it." He had been arbitrary in power as the head of an army and "truly not ill beloved by them," and he had taken this office limiting that power, binding him to do nothing without consent of the Council of State until Parliament assembled, or without consent of Parliament thereafter. The City, the sol-

diery, the judges, the people, had acclaimed his Oath. Writs for the new Parliament—this Parliament sitting, or for the moment not sitting—had expressly provided that the members returned "should not have power to alter the Government as now settled in one Single Person and a Parliament." It was—would any deny it?—understood that he was the Protector, and the Authority that called them. They now proposed to sit and not own the Authority by which they sat. This was to waste everything, to throw away chances that he believed were now given to them all. "I can sooner be willing to be rolled into my grave and buried with infamy, than I can give my consent thereunto." And so, "seeing the Authority that called you is so little valued, and so much slighted, till some such assurance be given as according to the proviso in the Writ of Return . . . I have cause a stop to be put to your entrance into the Parliament House."

That, then, was clear this time surely. Cromwell had one thing more to say, of crucial importance. There was in the lobby a parchment for such members to sign as would. It was an undertaking on their part that they would "be true and faithful to the Lord Protector and Commonwealth . . . and not . . . alter the Government as it is settled in a Single Person and a Parlia-

ment." And for his part, he solemnly asserted—"You have a legislative power without negative from me. As the Instrument doth express it, you may make any laws, and if I give not my Consent within twenty days . . . they are *ipso facto* laws." By the end of the month three hundred members had signed, and the remaining hundred and sixty had retired to their constituencies to nurse Anabaptist or Levelling grudges and indulge in private or public anathema against despotism. The three hundred were of little more advantage than the minority to the Protectorate. They were quite unable to follow Oliver's very plain and, it must be allowed, very reasonable lead, and they droned along in an interminable dispute upon constitutional principles. The Protectorate charter provided that a Parliament should be called at least once in three years, and that it could not be dissolved within less than five months of its meeting. Cromwell, observing his pledge not to interfere with parliamentary procedure, waited until the five months had passed, and then spoke his mind bluntly as usual. "As I may not take notice of what you have been doing, so I think I have a very great liberty to tell you that I do not know what you have been doing. I do not know whether you have been alive or dead. I have not once heard from you all this time;

I have not; and that you all know." He at Whitehall had seen everything going amiss that could, plots and treasons everywhere, wrongs unredressed, healing and settling tragically unadvanced; had seen, in fact, that "you have wholly elapsed your time, and done just nothing." He knew that some who had urged them to meet him in friendly conference, had been called to order; also he knew that some thought him ambitious for his own interest, to which he replied that if he were offered—as was whispered he might be—hereditary office, kingship, he would without hesitation decline it. And then despotism, howsoever benevolent, had to take a further decided step. He foresaw his difficulties, but "I never found God failing when I trusted Him. I can laugh and sing, in my heart, when I speak of these things." Which things amounted to the raising of money without Parliament, as he would now have to do, dependent on such confidence as he might have earned and would earn from the people. For, the five months being up, he thought himself "bound, as in my duty to God, and to the People of these Nations for their safety and good in every respect . . . to tell you that it is not . . . for common and public good for you to continue here any longer. And therefore I do declare unto you, that I do dissolve this Parliament."

XXI

SECOND PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT
CROMWELL AND KINGSHIP

XXI

SECOND PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT
CROMWELL AND KINGSHIP

THIS was in January 1655. Two months before, Oliver's mother had died at Whitehall, ninety-four years old, her son then being fifty-five. As she lay dying she spoke to him: "The Lord cause His face to shine upon you; and comfort you in all your adversities: and enable you to do great things for the glory of your Most High God, and to be a relief unto His People. My dear Son, I leave my heart with thee. A good night." To be a relief unto His People—that Oliver laboured continually to be; but the adversities were many, and often no comfort in them indeed but from the Lord. Those three speeches to his first Parliament show us Cromwell wrestling with circumstances that were beyond the ordering of even his resolution. The vision was undimmed and the power still ascending, but the "healing and settling" that he so purely desired were beyond human devising in those years. The most that could be done was to keep the foreign credit of England high,

moderate the excesses of fanaticism, and keep the country from a relapse to the old monarchic tyranny, and all this Cromwell did by his own force of will and integrity of spirit. But it was done in the face of dissensions that no man then could cure; dissensions that, as he sadly came to realise, were aggravated by his own increasingly despotic assumptions. There was no solution to his dilemma. Abdication meant, as he knew it meant, national disaster; his hand alone could hold the state to some fundamental sanity in the midst of incessant brawls and bedlamite stratagems. On the other hand, retention of his authority meant loneliness and ever more loneliness. His recent experience with Parliament was profoundly discouraging. He had so honestly wanted their confidence, so longed to work with them intimately in affection for the public good. They had failed him, had been merely cold or stupid or pedantic. And so he was alone, and at every step committed more and more deeply to methods for which he could offer to himself no other defence than necessity. His employment of the methods was beautifully marked by mercy, understanding, and probity; but the methods were, as none knew so well as he, a hopeless foundation for permanent peace in the State. A lesser man, even a slightly lesser man, would almost certainly have broken his

word and have deserted his post. Cromwell stayed at his, and it is probably not too much to say that in doing so he saved English liberty as we know it. It is impossible to realise his situation and to read his letters and speeches during the Protectorate, without astonishment that there can ever have been any judgment so deluded as to charge him with ambition and self-interest. "I would," he said to his second Parliament, speaking of his election to headship, "have been glad to have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep"; and the words have on them the unfeignable stamp of truth.

When Oliver dissolved his first Parliament he had less than four years to live. During that time there is much that might be added to our record of the things he did; but there is little or nothing that can tell us more clearly than is already seen the manner of man he was. He tried many expedients as a ruler, and was candid enough to acknowledge their failure when they failed, as they frequently did. In the interval between his two Parliaments he instituted administration by Major Generals, the country being divided into districts over each of which an officer was appointed with that title. He chose for this purpose men of the highest character, and under them Royalist and Anabaptist disaf-

fection was kept in control, but the system had defects that were the source of much misrepresentation from which Puritanism has had to suffer since. The Major Generals found that coursing fields, race meetings, cock-pits, bear-baitings, tavern parlours, and the purlieus of the playhouses were hotbeds of political or religious conspiracy, and they closed them down. We remember the saloons of modern America. But that kind of thing inevitably overreaches itself. Petty commissioners were let loose on a campaign of general interference, and the Puritan acquired the long face of popular superstition. These excesses were intolerable to Cromwell, but for a time he persuaded himself that he was powerless to arrest them. Under the Major Generals also was carried out the "decimation" of the Cavaliers, that is, the imposition of a ten per cent income tax to supply State needs. This penalising of a class was indefensible, but here again for a time Cromwell fell a victim to the casuistries of the case. His position was a false one, and it was in this way constantly playing him false. He always recovered himself; and the lapses it must be allowed were always from a grace that he alone wore with any certainty among the exalted in his age. Hard pressed on every side by dangers from which he had to defend the State and himself, he never allowed

panic to impair his essential liberality of mind. Levellers of all kinds on the one hand and Royalists on the other were a direct menace to the Government that he was sworn to uphold. In curbing them he was not and could not be indulgent, but every man was free to hold what opinions he would so long as they did not congeal into sedition. Cromwell's office in this as in all else was an equivocal one. A usurper's view of sedition is not an easy one to maintain, however rational it may be in given circumstances. Moreover, even Cromwell's natural tolerance was unequal to a quite unconditional application. Popery and Laudian Protestantism could not, he believed, be trusted even with freedom of opinion, since it would encourage them in an incurable antagonism to the new order. This was unfortunate, perhaps, for his reputation in history, but he was nevertheless probably right. And even here he was at any time prepared to enfranchise the High Church Protestants at least if he could have secured reasonable guarantees. In any case he was, within these limitations, steadily fixed in a policy of conciliation. A man might think what he liked and do what he liked with his own so long as he did not use doctrine or the memory of a martyred King as excuses for meddling in politics. In short, he was very willing to let any man alone, who would do as

much by him, and to see that others followed his example. Despotism had not often been so considerate.

With Parliament in abeyance, a Spanish war was added to the difficulties of Oliver's Protectorate. Its commercial and political courses were uncertain, and in Jamaica a British expedition came to grief, though Cromwell's subsequent diplomacy laid the foundations of our West Indian settlement. But at sea, the Commonwealth fortunes were gloriously advanced by Blake and Montagu. Their successes, and Cromwell's maintenance of a fleet in the Mediterranean, secured for Britain an unexampled measure of European prestige. It was, however, impossible to raise supplies necessary to such enterprises by decimation of Cavaliers, and in September 1656, Oliver summoned his second Parliament, a year and four months before the prescribed date. He was readily able to convince them of the justice of the war with Spain, and the session opened with some real promise of the accord that he so much desired between them and himself. But this was largely due to another, and this time an extreme act of despotism. Four hundred members had been returned, and of these nearly a hundred were Republicans—the anti-Single-Person men. These had been the leaders of obstruction in the former

Parliament, and had hindered "healing and settling" by their constitutional scruples. Cromwell was in no mind for a repetition of their antics. He excluded them. A howl of "privilege" went up, reminiscent of far other days; and Cromwell and the three hundred settled down to see whether they could not get on with the business of the country.

But more and more did the insecurity of the present "instrument" impress itself on a now friendly Parliament. Oliver himself was always sensible of it, and when the House approached him with a comprehensive "Petition and Advice" he was eager to listen and consider. The document proposed wide reforms, and provided for the recall of the excluded members and the re-establishment of a Second Chamber or House of Lords. But there was an even more significant clause than these. All the best statesmanship of the country now realised that English tradition and instinct could never be accommodated to the permanent principle of an elected chief magistrate. Very humbly, very firmly, and very logically, the Commons prayed Cromwell to accept Kingship. After much deliberation, he declined, but not until he had made it clear in long discussions with a select committee of the House that he realised how much wisdom lay in the proposal. It is almost

certain that his decision was made chiefly in deference to the wishes of a powerful element in the army that was shocked, largely we may believe on sentimental grounds, into unqualified protest. Oliver was not afraid of his army, and his mind, with all its tenderness, was never seduced by sentimental appeals. But his Ironsides had saved England and had placed him where he was to serve their faith, and he could not bring himself to disregard their pleas even though he questioned their perspicuity. Had he lived it is probable that a later summons from the House would have met with a different answer, with what effect on English history no one can say. As it was, Cromwell told his soldiers that the existing instrument had not been very effective, whether supported by Parliament or Major Generals, and that he did not know but what the proposed alternative might be worth trying; as also might the recall of a Second Chamber, seeing that it might act as a check on a somewhat too exuberant zeal in the correction of poor bigots that had lately caused him some concern. Having said so much, by way, it may well have been, of preparing opinion for the future, he told the Commons that he must not change his present title. On May 8th, 1657, he concluded his last address to the select committee: "I am persuaded to return this Answer to

you. That I cannot undertake this Government with the Title of King. And that is mine Answer to this great and weighty Business." The other reforms in principle he accepted. In the second session of the second Protectorate Parliament, January 1658, the Republicans took their place, and the new House of Lords, recruited from Cromwell's Puritan Notables in the Commons, met for the first time. This meant a serious reduction in the Cromwellian majority in the lower house, and at once the old challenge was renewed. No King, or Protector, or any other kind of Single Person, they would have someone in Whitehall understand, was wanted. In vain Cromwell asked them in God's name to bestir themselves; told them that Charles Stuart II was very active in their midst and gathering great impetus abroad. From the world of critical realities they screened themselves in a mist of precedent and theory. Ten days of it were enough. On February 4th, 1658, the House was summoned to the Lords, there to find His Highness waiting to deliver a speech of unusual brevity. "I had very comfortable expectations that God would make the meeting of this Parliament a blessing." They well knew the story of his election; how he came to it, how it had been confirmed, how he had employed it. They knew also, or if not it was for no want of

telling, of the dangers that surrounded them. And still they were wasting precious time in debating what was beyond their competence to debate. Treason everywhere, even in the army, was taking heart by their example. "These things tend to nothing but the playing of the King of Scots game, if I may so call him; and I think myself bound before God to do what I can to prevent it." Some of them had been perverting the army, some questioning the Protectorate, some even listing persons "by commission from Charles Stuart, to join with any Insurrection that may be made. . . . And what is like to come upon this . . . but even present blood and confusion? . . . I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I do dissolve this Parliament. And let God be judge between you and me." This is the last public utterance from Oliver of which we have any record.

XXII

LAST DAYS AND DEATH

XXII

LAST DAYS AND DEATH

THE dismissal of Parliament brought Royalist hopes headlong down. A House divided against itself was full of promising insurgency, but Cromwell without a House at all offered but a bleak prospect. Left to himself, he smothered the rising flames with a last rousing of the old vigour. In June Sir Henry Slingsby and the Rev. John Hewett, notable leaders of Royalist agitation, were executed on Tower Hill, and the threatened conflagration subsided into smouldering ash for two years. Whether it would ever have broken out again as beacons of the Restoration if Cromwell had lived, it is impossible to say. Oliver was now fifty-nine years of age, in the late prime of his intellectual powers. But his physical energy had been incessantly and heavily taxed since 1640, and the strain was telling. More than once during the negotiations in the matter of kingship he had been kept from engagements with the committee by indisposition; more than once he had had to ask their indulgence as he faltered in a speech.

"You will pardon me that I speak these things in such a desultory way as this. I may be borne withal, because I have not truly well stood the exercise that hath been upon me these three or four days. I have not, I say." He still drove out to Hampton Court on Saturdays, by way of Hammersmith, where on one occasion a malcontent took a house from which to blow up the Protectorate coach as it passed along the narrow road, but the blunderbuses or some other part of the project misfired. Rarely could Oliver snatch an hour's recreation at Whitehall to carry him over to the next Hampton week-end. But he never allowed the geniality wholly to slip out of his life in the unending agitation of state affairs. Domestic affections were not allowed to rust in the Cromwell household. Musicians, the best that could be procured, were always in attendance at his court. And he could indulge in lighter pleasures. "Sometimes closeted with his counsellors he could be very cheerful with them; and laying aside his greatness, he would be exceedingly familiar; and by way of diversion would make verses with them, play at crambo with them, and everyone must try his fancy. He commonly called for tobacco, pipes and a candle, and would now and then take tobacco himself." Any attention or appeal from the seats of learning found him immediately re-

sponsive; and he was not afraid of having poets about him. When his Latin Secretary of State, John Milton, became blind, Cromwell appointed Andrew Marvell to assist him. Of Oliver's own reading we know but little beyond the evidence that is scattered up and down his speeches of an infinitely detailed and living knowledge of the Bible. But a correspondent * calls my attention to a fragment of possible evidence that seems to have escaped the commentators. Reference has been made to Cromwell's conversation with Hampden after Edgehill. His actual words, as reported by himself in a speech to the Parliamentary committee on kingship, were: "Your troops are most of them old decayed servingmen, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows, and their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality." . . . Falstaff (Henry IV Part I Act IV Scene 2) complains that he can do no better in his ragged regiment than "discarded unjust serving men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen. . . ." The echo may have no significance; but it probably has.

A few weeks after the dissolution of his last Parliament, Cromwell was saddened by the death of a young son-in-law, by name Rich, to whom his youngest daughter Frances had been

* Mr. G. Emmison, of Bedford.

married but four months. The succeeding summer saw Oliver's rule maturing at home, and his arms prosperous abroad. In June a combined English and French force routed the Spaniards at Dunkirk. But the Protector was making dangerous calls on his physical reserves. In July his beloved daughter Elizabeth Claypole was seized with a fatal illness at Hampton Court. For a fortnight Oliver did not leave her bedside, refusing to attend to public business. On August 6th she died, and her father was a broken man. On the 20th George Fox, the Quaker, saw him riding in Hampton Park, and "before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his Lifeguard, I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him." Four days later Oliver was with difficulty taken back to Whitehall, in a high fever. A strange hush fell over the country as for ten days he fought for his life. But the reserves were spent. He talked fitfully of the succession, rallied a little now and then, uttered incoherent scraps of prayer. Once his mind cleared, and he spoke for the last time on earth with the God who had been a living presence to him through all things. "I may, I will come to Thee, for Thy People . . . Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. . . . Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments, to depend more upon

Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy People too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer, even for Jesus Christ's sake." And then, as though in a word remembered from his mother's deathbed, "And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen." On Friday, September 3rd, 1658, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, his "Fortunate Day," as he liked to call it, between three and four in the afternoon, he died.

INDEX

A

Alabaster, Dr., 72
Argyll, Marquis of, 201
Army Plot, 125

B

Bastwick, John, 91, 92, 94
Beard, Thomas, 73
Bedford, Earl of, 99, 135
Bill of Attainder, 125
Blake, Robert, 210, 236
Bradshaw, John, 16, 171, 183
Buckingham, Duke of, 36, 73, 74, 125
  and James I, 37, 38
  ascendancy to power of, 42, 51
  dangerous excesses of, 53
  saved by Charles from impeachment, 55
  indispensable to Charles, 62, 71
  demand for removal of, 64, 65
  murder of, 66
Bunyan, John, 54
Burton, Henry, 91, 92, 95

C

Carlyle, Thomas (quoted), 19, 24, 27, 34, 35, 49, 52, 196
Cary, Lucius (Lord Falkland), 104
Cavendish, William (Marquis of Newcastle), 146
Chambers, Richard, 94, 95
Charles I, 15, 42, 88, 93, 103, 121, 219
  visits Sir Oliver Cromwell, 27
  and Buckingham, 53, 55, 60, 66
Charles I, third parliament of, 55, 60
  and Petition of Right, 62, 64, 70
  Henrietta Maria's influence on, 71
  and Strafford, 73, 74
  dissolves Long Parliament, 76
  enforces Ship-Money, 95, 107
  prohibits emigration, 100
  summons Short Parliament, 104, 105
  dissolves Short Parliament, 106
  summons Long Parliament, 107
  attempts rescue of Strafford, 125
  signs Strafford's death warrant, 126
  intrigues with Scotch and Irish, 128
  and the Grand Remonstrance, 128-129
  flies from London, 130, 135
  assembles arms, 134, 136
  and the Civil War, 136, 137, 140, 141, 150
  a prisoner of the Scots, 153, 159-160
  taken by the army, 160
  plots against Cromwell, 162
  executed, 171
Charles II, 25, 153, 187, 189, 201, 205, 206, 239
Clarendon, Earl of (Edward Hyde), 18-19, 104, 105, 123, 129, 130, 201
Claypole, Elizabeth, 246
Coke, Sir Edward, 61, 63, 64

INDEX

Cromwell, Bridget, 158, 212
Cromwell, Elizabeth (wife), 47, 48, 51, 69
Cromwell, Elizabeth (mother), 25, 69, 93, 231
Cromwell, Sir Henry, 23, 27
Cromwell, Oliver
  according to the chroniclers, 13-20
  birth and family of, 23-25
  youth of, 26-29
  at Cambridge University, 27, 29, 33, 34
  marriage of, 34, 47, 48
  conditions of life in early manhood of, 35, 49-55, 69, 87, 88
  first parliamentary speech of, 72
  as Justice of the Peace, 80
  moves to St. Ives, 80
  and Laud's tyranny, 84, 85
  and Charles's despotism, 84, 180
  domestic peace of, 93
  opposes the draining of the fens, 99
  contemplates emigration, 100
  election to parliament of, 55, 104
  the Representative Puritan, 112, 114
  the man of action, 112, 115-117
  and the Long Parliament, 113, 123
  introduces Root-and-Branch bill, 127
  and the first Civil War, 135-141, 147-153
  organises Eastern Association, 138
  promoted Lieutenant-General, 145
  supports self-denying ordinances, 148
  desires reformed monarchy, 161, 162
  and the Second Civil War, 167, 188
Cromwell, Oliver, and the execution of the King, 169-171, 176
  the Patriot, 169, 178
  the administrator, 178, 184-186
  the usurper, 179-180
  and Ireland, 186-197
  at Dunbar, 202, 203
  takes Edinburgh Castle, 203
  Chancellor of Oxford University, 204
  again breaks Scotch army, 205
  and reconstruction, 209-216
  made Lord Protector, 216
  on Church Government, 220, 222-224
  imperial and foreign diplomacy of, 220, 223
  at Whitehall, 221
  and his first parliament, 221, 223-228, 231
  dissolves parliament, 228, 233
  is beset by difficulties, 231-235
  institutes administration by Major-Generals, 233
  summons second parliament, 236
  refuses offer of Kingship, 237
  dissolves second parliament, 240
  last days, 243-247
  death of, 247
Cromwell, Sir Oliver, 52
Cromwell, Richard, 51, 190, 204
Cromwell, Robert, 23-25
Cromwell, Thomas (Earl of Essex), 25

D

Downhall, Henry, 50, 51, 54

E

Eastern Association, 138, 145, 147, 149, 150, 203
Edgehill, 136, 138, 206, 245
Eliot, Sir John, 54, 75, 80-82, 85, 95
Elizabeth, Queen, 36, 39, 41

INDEX

Essex, Earl of, 135, 148, 149
Evelyn, John (quoted), 121

F

Fairfax, Thomas, 54, 149, 150, 158
Felton, John, 65
Finch, Sir John, 75
Flagellum: or, The Life, etc., of Oliver Cromwell, 16
Fleetwood, Charles, 211
Fox, George, 54, 246

G

Geddes, Jenny, 93
Grand Remonstrance, 123, 128, 129
Grenvil, Sir Bevill, 104
Grey, Thomas, 171

H

Hamilton, Duke of, 167
Hampden, John, 54, 69, 70, 85, 105, 130, 206, 245
  Cromwell's neighbour in youth, 27, 48
  friendship for Sir John Eliot, 81
  resists levying of Ship-Money, 97-99
  contemplates emigration, 100
  and the Civil War, 135-138
  death of, 141
Hazlerigg, 130
Heath, James (quoted), 16-17, 24, 28, 33, 34, 35, 54
Heath, Sir Robert, 63
Henrietta Maria, 71, 134
Hewett, the Rev. John, 243
Hitch, the Rev., 142
Holles, Denzil, 130
Hyde, Edward (see Earl of Clarendon)

I

Ireton, Henry, 16, 158, 162, 191, 211, 212

J

James I
  visits Sir Oliver Cromwell, 27
  policy of, 37
  and Buckingham, 37, 42
  demands levy on public money, 39
  desires peace abroad, 39, 40
  dispenses with parliament, 42
  catholic sympathies of, 41
  negotiates with Spanish Court, 42, 43

L

Laud, Archbishop, 93, 106, 113, 127, 222
  harries the "Lecturers," 50
  High Church policy of, 72, 73
  becomes Archbishop of Canterbury, 82, 83
  tyranny of, not comparable with persecution of Popery, 83
  suppresses Puritan ministries, 84
  upholds Charles's policy, 87
  makes use of the Star Chamber, 83, 91
  inaugurates reign of his bishops in Scotland, 93
  attempts to impose ritual on the Kirk, 103
  denounced as Anti-Christ, 106
  sanctions Sunday sports with reservation, 122
  imprisonment of, 126
Lenthall, William, 167, 206, 213
Lilburne, John, 92, 123
Lockyer, Nicholas, 185
Lynne, William, 25

M

Manchester, Earl of, 148, 149
Marston Moor, 146, 148, 151, 161, 169, 186, 203, 205, 211
Marvell, Andrew, 54, 245
Mayor, Dorothy, 190
Mayor, Richard, 190, 202, 204
Milton, John, 47, 54, 74, 112, 190, 245

INDEX

Monk, George, 205
Montagu, Edward (the Earl of Sandwich), 52, 54, 236
Montagu, Sidney, 52

N

Naseby, 150, 157, 158, 161, 168, 169, 186, 205, 211
New Model Army, 115, 149, 150, 151, 159, 160, 167

O

Ormond, Marquis of, 189, 191, 192, 195

P

Petition of Right, 62, 64, 65, 70, 84, 128
Pride, Thomas, 168
Prynne, William, 91-94, 124
Pym, John, 54, 63, 75, 85, 105, 126, 130, 141

R

Root-and-Branch Bill, 127
Rupert, Prince, 136, 141, 146-147

S

Selden, John, 54
Self-Denying Ordinance, 148, 149
Ship-Money, 95-97, 107
Slingsby, Sir Henry, 243
Solemn League and Covenant, 141
Star Chamber, 65, 71, 83, 91, 92, 123
Stewart, Thomas, 93
Strafford, Earl of (Thomas Wentworth), 129
  becomes court favourite, 73
  patriotic motives of, 74
  and Pym, 74, 75
  upholds Charles's authority, 87
  uncompromising spirit of, 105, 113
  arrogance of, 124
  and Bill of Attainder, 125
  execution of, 126
Strode, William, 130

V

Vane, Sir Henry, 127

W

Warwick, Sir Philip (quoted), 123
Wentworth, Thomas (see Earl of Strafford)

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